BUDDHISM

CRITICAL CONCEPTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Edited by
PAUL WILLIAMS

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Critical Concepts in Religious Studies

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Volume IV

Abhidharma and Madhyamaka

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THE NOTION OF *SVABHĀVA* IN THE THOUGHT OF CANDRAKĪRTI*

William L. Ames

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The idea of *svabhāva*, which literally means '[its] own (*sva*) existence or being or nature (*bhāva*)', is of central importance in Mādhyamika Buddhist philosophy. As such, it has been a subject of considerable discussion in recent scholarly literature.[1] It is closely related to the question of the two truths[2] and the problem of the existence and nature of the absolute[3] in Mādhyamika thought. Since the Mādhyamika, like all Buddhist philosophy, is never without a soteriological purpose, the concept of *svabhāva* is also connected with the way in which the Buddhist path and its goal, enlightenment, are understood.[4]

In this paper, I propose to examine the notion of *svabhāva* as it occurs in two major works by Candrakīrti, who was one of the most important figures in the development of Mādhyamika thought. He represents the Prāsaṅgika sub-school of the Mādhyamika, as distinct from the Svātantrika sub-school. The two works are the *Prasannapadā*, a commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, and the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, an independent work in the form of verses and autocommentary. The *Prasannapadā* is available both in Sanskrit and in Tibetan, whereas the Sanskrit of the *Madhyamakāvatāra* has been lost. The first of the two works to be written was the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, since Candrakīrti refers to it and quotes from it several times in the *Prasannapadā*.

How, then, does Candrakīrti define *svabhāva*? Perhaps the clearest statement occurs in the *Prasannapadā*: "Here that property which is invariable in a thing is called its *svabhāva*, because [that property] is not dependent on another. For, in common usage, heat is called the *svabhāva* of fire, because it is invariable in it. That same heat, when it is apprehended in water, is not *svabhāva*, because it is contingent, since it has arisen from other causal conditions."[5] Thus 'intrinsic nature' or 'inherent nature' seems to be a good translation for *svabhāva*. The same applies to the term *svarūpa*, literally, '[its] own (*sva*) form or nature (*rūpa*)', which appears to be used as a synonym of *svabhāva*. In this paper, I will translate *svarūpa* as 'intrinsic nature' and leave *svabhāva* untranslated.

At this point, two technical problems need to be discussed. In Tibetan,

svabhāva is normally translated by *rang bzhin* or *ngo bo nyid*, while *svarūpa* is normally translated by *rang gi ngo bo*. In a Mādhyamika context, there seems to be no difference in meaning between *rang bzhin* and *ngo bo nyid*. That is, the Tibetan translation appears to use the terms interchangeably, rather than to distinguish different senses of the Sanskrit word *svabhāva*. More troublesome is the fact that *rang bzhin* also translates *prakṛti*, 'original nature' or simply 'nature'. Clearly, the Tibetan translators and their Indian collaborators felt that *svabhāva* and *prakṛti* were synonymous. Also, in a passage from the *Prasannapadā* which will be translated in this paper, Candrakīrti lists *prakṛti* as one equivalent of *svabhāva*. Thus in translating from the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, where the original Sanskrit is not available, I have consistently translated *rang bzhin* as *svabhāva*.

We have seen how Candrakīrti defines *svabhāva*. What does he say about it? In the *Prasannapadā*, we read, "There being no *svabhāva*, because entities (*bhāva*) are dependently originated (*pratītyasamutpanna*) . . ."[6] Likewise, in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, "Because simply the fact of being conditioned by such-and-such (*rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam zhig, idaṃpratyayatāmātra*) is determined to be the meaning of dependent origination, *svabhāva* is not accepted for any entity."[7] According to the *Prasannapadā*, ordinary persons impute "a false *svabhāva*, [which] has a nature not at all perceived by the *āryas*".[8]

From these quotations, it would seem that Candrakīrti categorically denies that any *svabhāva*, or intrinsic nature, exists. Other passages, however, give a very different impression. In contrast to the last quotation from the *Prasannapadā*, the *Madhyamakāvatāra* states that "*svabhāva* does not in any way appear to those having misknowledge (*avidyā*)."[9] In the *Prasannapadā* itself, we read that, without verbal teaching, "the learner is not able to understand *svabhāva* as it really is".[10] In the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Candrakīrti goes so far as to say, "Ultimate reality (*don dam pa, paramārtha*) for the Buddhas is *svabhāva* itself. That, moreover, because it is nondeceptive is the truth of ultimate reality. It must be known by each of them for himself (*so so rang gis rig par bya ba, pratyātmavedya*)."[11]

Thus it is apparent that Candrakīrti is using the term *svabhāva* in at least two different senses. To explore this further, we will examine in detail two longer passages, one from the *Madhyamakāvatāra* and one from the *Prasannapadā*. Both of these excerpts deal with the first two *kārikās* in chapter fifteen of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyakakārikās*. The *Madhyamakāvatāra* passage begins by quoting them:

A305–11 The arising of *svabhāva* through causes and conditions is not right.
A *svabhāva* arisen from causes and conditions would be artificial (*kṛtaka*). (15–1)
But how will *svabhāva* be called artificial?
For *svabhāva* is non-contingent (*akṛtrima*) and without dependence on another. (15–2)

[Question:] But does there exist a *svabhāva* of the sort defined by the *ācārya*[12] [Nāgārjuna] in the treatise [*Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikās*], which is accepted by the *ācārya*?

A306–1 [Answer:] What is called dharma-ness (*chos nyid, dharmatā*) exists, regarding which the Blessed One said, "Whether Tathāgatas arise or do not arise, this dharma-ness of dharmas remains," etc.

[Question:] But what is this which is called dharma-ness?

[Answer:] The *svabhāva* of these [dharmas], such as the eye.

[Question:] But what is their *svabhāva*?

[Answer:] That which these have[13] which is non-contingent and without dependence on another; [it is their] intrinsic nature, which is to be comprehended by cognition free from the ophthalmia of misknowledge.

Who [would] ask whether that exists or not? If it did not exist, for what purpose would bodhisattvas cultivate the path of the perfections? Because [it is] in order to comprehend that dharma-ness [that] bodhisattvas undertake hundreds of difficult [actions].

After a quotation from the *Ratnamegha Sūtra*,[14] Candrakīrti resumes:

A307–9 [Objection:] Incredible! (*kye ma ma la, aho bata*) You do not accept even the slightest entity; [yet] suddenly (*glo bur du*) you accept a *svabhāva* which is non-contingent and without dependence on another. You are one who says mutually contradictory things!

[Answer:] You are one who does not understand the intention of the treatise. Its intention is this: The dependently arising intrinsic nature[15] of the eye, etc., is graspable by spiritually immature (*byis pa, bāla*) persons. If just this were the *svabhāva* of those [dharmas], [then] since that *svabhāva* would be comprehended even by one who is in error, the religious life (*tshangs par spyod pa, brahmacarya*) would be pointless. But because just this is not *svabhāva*, therefore, in order to see that [*svabhāva*],[16] the religious life is to the point.

A308–1 Moreover, I speak of non-contingency and non-dependence on another, with regard to the conventional truth (*kun rdzob kyi bden pa, saṃvṛtisatya*). Only that which spiritually immature people cannot see is suitable as *svabhāva*. By that very [fact], ultimate reality (*don dam pa, paramārtha*) is

not an entity or a non-entity, because it is tranquil by [its] intrinsic nature (*rang bzhin gyis zhi ba nyid*).

Not only is this *svabhāva* accepted by the *ācārya* [Nāgārjuna], but he is able to make others accept this point as well.[17] Therefore, it is also determined that this *svabhāva* is established for both [that is, Nāgārjuna and his opponent, once he has admitted the force of Nāgārjuna's arguments].

As for those who say that the *svabhāva* of fire is heat,[18] and so on, they are totally wrong, because [heat] is contingent and dependent, due to [its] dependent origination. Nor is it right to say that, because of the existence [of heat], that [heat] exists without contingency and without dependence on another. [This is so] because the entity referred to by this [term] 'that [heat]' does not exist and because a thing (*don, artha*) of such a kind is taught as conventional reality (*kun rdzob tu, saṃvṛtyā*).

First, Candrakīrti asserts that Nāgārjuna does, indeed, accept that a *svabhāva* of the sort which he defines in MMK 15–2cd exists. This is not a trivial question, because to define a term is not necessarily to assert that there exists anything which satisfies the definition. One can define 'unicorn' without believing that unicorns exist. From the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* alone, it is far from clear that Nāgārjuna would be willing to use the term *svabhāva* in any positive way, as he occasionally does *tattva* and *dharmatā* (Unlike Candrakīrti, Nāgārjuna does not explicitly equate *svabhāva* and *dharmatā*.) One possibly ambiguous case, MMK 7–16b, *śāntaṃ svabhāvataḥ*, 'tranquil by *svabhāva*', is glossed by Candrakīrti (B160–6) as *svabhāvavirahitam*, 'devoid of *svabhāva*'. This interpretation is supported by MMK 22–16, which states that the Tathāgata and the world have the same *svabhāva*, but immediately adds that the Tathāgata is without *svabhāva* and the world is without *svabhāva*. However, a study of all of Nāgārjuna's works, with which Candrakīrti was certainly familiar, might lead to a different conclusion about his views.

Candrakīrti goes on to relate the question of *svabhāva* to the idea of a path of spiritual practice. The concept of a path presupposes that one does not ordinarily perceive things as they really are, but that through practicing a path – in Buddhism, conduct, meditative concentration, and discernment (*sīla, samādhi*, and *prajñā*) – one can come to perceive reality. Thus ultimate reality can neither be what is ordinarily perceived, nor can it be finally unrealizable. Therefore, genuine *svabhāva*, real intrinsic nature, must exist; but it can be directly perceived only by those who are advanced on the path.

Candrakīrti apparently equates this genuine *svabhāva* with ultimate reality (*paramārtha*). Thus although *svabhāva* exists, it, like *paramārtha*, is neither an entity nor a non-entity. Implicitly, this is why it is not an object of ordinary perception, since we perceive the world in terms of entities or their absence. Also,

Candrakīrti cautions that the definition of *svabhāva* as non-contingent and independent is conventional truth. Presumably, this is because *svabhāva*, as ultimate reality, is not susceptible of being defined by words and concepts.

Finally, Candrakīrti distinguishes *svabhāva* as ultimate reality from the conventional idea that, for example, heat is the *svabhāva* of fire. He rejects the latter on the grounds that heat originates dependently and therefore is contingent. He then refutes an objection which is not entirely clear. The opponent may mean that if heat is said to arise dependently, then it must exist. To exist, it must be a real entity and therefore not contingent. Candrakīrti's reply would then mean that the opponent makes a false assumption about what the Mādhyamika means by dependent origination. For the Mādhyamika, what is dependent can never be a real entity.

Many of these points are expanded and clarified in the *Prasannapadā*. It seems that, between writing the *Madhyamakāvatāra* and writing the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti thought further about the questions surrounding the notion of *svabhāva*. Our *Prasannapadā* passage begins immediately after *kārikā* 15–2ab. For the sake of context, the translation of 15–1, 2ab is repeated.

> The arising of *svabhāva* through causes and conditions is not right.
>
> A *svabhāva* arisen from causes and conditions would be artificial (*kṛtaka*). (15–1)
>
> But how will *svabhāva* be called artificial? (15–2ab)
>
> B260–4 "Both artificial and *svabhāva*:" because [these terms] are mutually incompatible, this [phrase] has an inconsistent sense. For here the etymology [is] that *svabhāva* is [something's] own nature (*svo bhāvaḥ svabhāva*). Therefore, in common usage, a thing (*padārtha*) which is artificial, such as the heat of water . . . is never called *svabhāva*. But what is not artificial is *svabhāva*, for example, the heat of fire . . . For that is called *svabhāva* because of not being produced by contact (*samparka*) with other things.
>
> Therefore, since the fixed worldly usage (*lokavyavahāra*) is thus that the non-artificial is *svabhāva*, we now say: Let it be recognized (*gṛhyatām*) that heat, also, is not the *svabhāva* of fire, because of [its] artificiality. Here one apprehends that fire, which arises[19] from the conjunction of a gem and fuel and the sun or from the friction of two sticks, etc., is purely (*eva*) dependent on causes and conditions; but heat does not occur apart from fire. Therefore, heat, too, is produced by causes and conditions, and therefore is artificial; and because of [its] being artificial, like the heat of water, it is clearly ascertained that [the heat of fire] is not [fire's] *svabhāva*.

[Objection:] Isn't it well known (*prasiddha*) to people, including cowherds and women, that the heat of fire is [its] *svabhāva*?

B261–1 [Answer:] Indeed, did we say that it was not well known? Rather, we say this: This does not deserve (*arhati*) to be *svabhāva*, because it is destitute of the defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of *svabhāva*. But because of following the errors of misknowledge, the world accepts the whole class of entities (*bhāvajātam*), [which is] totally (*eva*) without *svabhāva*, as having *svabhāva*.

For example, those with ophthalmia, due to the ophthalmia as causal condition, believe (*abhiniviṣṭa*) that [illusory] hairs and the like, [which are] purely without *svabhāva*, have *svabhāva*.[20] Likewise, the spiritually immature, due to their eye of understanding (*matinayana*) being impaired by the ophthalmia of misknowledge, believe that the whole class of entities, [which is] without *svabhāva*, has *svabhāva*. In accordance with their belief, they declare the defining characteristic. [For instance,] heat is the specific characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*) of fire because it is just [fire's] own defining characteristic (*svameva lakṣaṇam*), since it is not apprehended in anything other than that [fire] and thus is peculiar (*asādhāraṇa*) [to it].

And just because of the consensus (*prasiddhi*) of spiritually immature persons, this same conventional intrinsic nature (*sāṃvṛtam svarūpam*) of these [entities] was laid down by the Blessed One in the Abhidharma. A generic property (*sādhāraṇam*), however, such as impermanence, is called a 'general characteristic' (*sāmanyalakṣaṇa*). But when it is a question of (*apekṣyate*) the vision of those having clear eyes of discernment (*prajñā*), free from the ophthalmia of misknowledge, then it is stated very clearly by the *āryas*,[21] who do not apprehend the *svabhāva* imagined in the opinions of spiritually immature people – as those without ophthalmia do not see the hairs imagined by those with ophthalmia – that this [imagined *svabhāva*] is not the *svabhāva* of entities.

After quotations from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Candrakīrti's commentary resumes:

B262–8 [Objection:] If, indeed, [you] say that such [things] as this heat of fire are not *svabhāva*[22] – since they are due to causes and conditions and thus are artificial – in this case,

what is the defining characteristic of the *svabhāva* of that [fire, etc.]? And what is that *svabhāva*? [This] ought to be stated.

[Answer:]

For *svabhāva* is non-contingent (*akṛtrima*) and without dependence on another. (15–2cd)

Here *svabhāva* is [something's] own nature (*svo bhāvaḥ svabhāva*). Thus that which is some thing's own character
B263–1 (*ātmīyaṃ rūpam*) is called its *svabhāva*. And what is something's own? That which, for it, is not contingent.[23] But that which is contingent, such as the heat of water, is not its own.

And what is under someone's control (*yacca yasyāyattam*) is also his own, such as his own servants, his own wealth. But that of his which is under another's control is not his own, such as something temporarily borrowed, not subject to himself (*asvatantram*).

Thus what is contingent and what is dependent on another are not considered to be *svabhāva*. For just this reason, it is not correct that heat is fire's *svabhāva* – because it is dependent on causes and conditions, and because it is artificial, since it arises after having previously been non-existent (*pūrvamabhūtvā paścādutpādena*). And because this is so, therefore, just that is called [fire's] *svabhāva* which is:

B264–1 [1] [a] invariable (*avyabhicāri*) for fire even in the three times,

[b] its innate nature (*nijaṃ rūpam*),

[c] non-contingent,

[d] which does not occur after having previously been non-existent; and

[2] which is not – like the heat of water, like the farther and nearer shore, or like long and short – dependent on causes and conditions.

[Question:] Does that intrinsic nature (*svarūpam*) of fire, [which is] thus, exist?

[Answer:] It neither exists, nor does it not exist, by intrinsic nature (*na tadasti na cāpi nāsti svarūpataḥ*). Although [this is] so, nevertheless, in order to avoid frightening [our] hearers, we say that it exists, having imputed [it] as conventional reality (*saṃvṛtyā samāropya*).

As the Blessed One said,

Of the Dharma without syllables (*anakṣara*), what hearing [is there] and what teaching?
Because of imputation (*samāropād*), [that which is] without syllables is heard and also taught.

Here, also, [Nāgārjuna] will say:

'Empty' should not be said, nor should 'non-empty',
Nor both, nor neither. But it is spoken of for the sake of conventional designation (*prajñaptyartham*). (MMK22–11)

[Question:] If, indeed, through imputation (*adhyāropato*) you say that that [intrinsic nature] exists, what is it like?
[Answer:] Just that which is called the dharma-ness of dharmas (*dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā*) is their intrinsic nature (*tatsvarūpam*).
[Question:] Then what is this dharma-ness of dharmas?
[Answer:] The *svabhāva* of dharmas.
[Question:] What is this *svabhāva*?
[Answer:] Original nature (*prakṛti*).
[Question:] But what is this original nature?
[Answer:] That which emptiness is (*yeyam śūnyatā*).
[Question:] What is this emptiness?
[Answer:] Lack of *svabhāva* (*naiḥsvābhāvyam*).
[Question:] What is this lack of *svabhāva*?
B265–1 [Answer:] Thusness (*tathatā*).
[Question:] What is this thusness?
[Answer:] The being thus, changelessness, ever-abidingness (*tathābhāvo 'vikaritvam sadaiva sthāyitā*). For complete non-origination (*sarvaśa anutpāda*) itself – because of [its] not depending on another and[24] [its] being non-contingent – is called the *svabhāva* of such [things] as fire.
This is what has been said: The whole class of entities is apprehended through the power of the ophthalmia of misknowledge. With whatever nature [that class] becomes an object – by means of non-seeing – for the *āryas*, [who are] free from the ophthalmia of misknowledge, just that intrinsic nature is determined to be the *svabhāva* of these [entities].[25] Also, it should be understood that learned teachers (*ācārya*) have laid down this as the definition of that [*svabhāva*]:

For *svabhāva* is non-contingent and without dependence on another. (15–2cd)

> And that *svabhāva* of entities, [which is] of the nature of non-origination, is – because of being a mere non-entity, since it is nothing at all – just non-*svabhāva*.[26] Therefore, it should be understood that there is no *svabhāva* of entities.[27]

Candrakīrti begins by showing that there is a contradiction in the conventional view of *svabhāva*. In accepted usage, contingent qualities of a thing are not that thing's *svabhāva*. Heat is not the *svabhāva* of water because water may be either cold or hot and still be water. Fire, on the other hand, is invariably hot. Moreover, at least in ancient Indian physics, heat is not found apart from fire. Thus heat is commonly accepted to be the *svabhāva* of fire. But, Candrakīrti continues, if *svabhāva* must be non-contingent, heat cannot be *svabhāva*. Heat exists only when fire exists; and fire itself is contingent, dependent for its existence on causes and conditions. Thus heat, also, is contingent and hence is not *svabhāva*.

In fact, for the Mādhyamikas, the basic error in the conventional view is its assumption that the world is composed of entities possessing *svabhāva*, so that they exist by virtue of their own intrinsic nature. The Mādhyamikas see this as being incompatible with the fundamental fact that things are dependent on causes and conditions. On the purely conventional level, where the belief in *svabhāva* is taken for granted, it is surely better to say that the *svabhāva* of fire is heat, rather than wetness, since fire and heat are, at least, always found together. But when one is not speaking purely conventionally, it has to be denied that heat qualifies as *svabhāva*, due to the dependent, contingent nature of both heat and fire.

In a criticism of the Mādhyamika's critique of *svabhāva*, B. Bhattacharyya says, "But Nāgārjuna here seems to overlook the simple fact that warmth is an inseparable feature of fire ... We find no logical difficulty in admitting that the nature of a thing is dependent on the conditions that bring the thing itself into being."[28] Nāgārjuna, as far as I know, does not use the example of heat and fire. On the other hand, as we have seen, Candrakīrti is well aware that heat is an inseparable feature of fire. In fact, he holds that, as long as the assumption that things have an intrinsic nature is not questioned, being an 'inseparable feature' is the proper criterion for *svabhāva*. The kind of nature which the Mādhyamikas reject is a nature which would be dependent on nothing else and thus would make the thing possessing it an independent entity. On the other hand, if heat, fire's supposed *svabhāva*, is, like fire, dependent on other things as causes, then we cannot claim that fire exists through its own intrinsic nature. Thus, according to Candrakīrti, when a certain property and a certain thing are invariably apprehended together, that property is conventionally called the *svabhāva* of that thing. Upon examination, though, this conventional *svabhāva* fails to qualify as a true intrinsic nature.

Thus it may seem that Candrakīrti's final position is a complete and unequivocal denial that *svabhāva* exists. This proves, however, to be not quite the case.

After carefully reiterating the definition of *svabhāva*, Candrakīrti says that "it neither exists, nor does it not exist, by intrinsic nature". This differs from his statement in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* that it exists, but it is reminiscent of his saying there that it is neither an entity nor a non-entity.

The last statement offers a clue for understanding what Candrakīrti means here. In the conventional view of the world, whatever exists is an entity possessing *svabhāva*. Thus to lack *svabhāva* is to be nonexistent. Moreover, existence and nonexistence are correlative concepts; the nonexistence of some things stands in contrast to the existence of others. What Candrakīrti is pointing out is that if there is no *svabhāva*, then there is no existence by means of *svabhāva*; and then relative to what are things lacking *svabhāva* nonexistent? Thus the whole conventional understanding of existence and nonexistence 'by intrinsic nature' is wrong.

One might feel uneasy at this point. Isn't the complete nonexistence of *svabhāva* what Candrakīrti wants to assert after all? The nonexistence of a particular entity, like a table, is relative to the existence of other entities. The nonexistence of *svabhāva* itself, though, cannot be relative to the existence of something else which possesses *svabhāva*!

To the Mādhyamikas, the attempt to understand the world in terms of entities possessing *svabhāva* fails fundamentally; and if one has thoroughly understood this, the question of the existence or non-existence of such entities, or their *svabhāva*, simply does not arise. Candrakīrti makes this clear in a passage in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*,[29] using his recurrent example of the illusory hairs seen by a person with ophthalmia. In this version of the example, a person with normal vision sees someone with opthalmia trying to scrape illusory hairs out of a jar. The first person sees no hairs; and so he forms no idea relating to hairs, whether of entity or non-entity, hair or non-hair, etc. Only when the one suffering from ophthalmia explains that he sees hairs in the jar, does the first person, in order to remove his misapprehension, tell him that the hairs do not exist. Thus the notion of the non-existence of *svabhāva* can arise only in relation to the illusion that *svabhāva* exists. The enlightened are without the illusion and have no need of its negation, but they negate it in order to teach the unenlightened. This negation, however, cannot be the ultimate truth because it is left behind as unnecessary after the illusion has been left behind.

Returning to the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti continues, "... nevertheless, in order to avoid frightening [our] hearers, we say that [intrinsic nature, *svarūpa*] exists, having imputed [it] as conventional reality." What is this imputed intrinsic nature then? Candrakīrti leads us, not without some humor, through a succession of Buddhist terms for ultimate reality, including both *svabhāva* and *naiḥsvābhāvyam*, lack of *svabhāva*! Finally, we are told that "complete non-origination itself ... is called the *svabhāva* of such [things] as fire," because it satisfies the criteria given in Nāgārjuna's definition of *svabhāva*. We should note that a little earlier, Candrakīrti quoted a line from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* which

says, "Oh Mahāmati, I have said that all dharmas are unoriginated, meaning (*sandhāya*) nonorigination by *svabhāva*."[30] Hence the fact that things do not arise through *svabhāva*, intrinsic nature, is their *svabhāva*.

Does this mean that the imputed *svabhāva* is the very non-existence of *svabhāva*? Apparently, this is just what it does mean, since Candrakīrti concludes by saying that the "*svabhāva* of entities ... is ... just non-*svabhāva*. Therefore, it should be understood that there is no *svabhāva* of entities."

Here two apparent contradictions need to be discussed. The first is that between the statement in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* that *svabhāva* exists and the statement in the *Prasannapadā* that "it neither exists, nor does it not exist, by intrinsic nature". In the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti adds that, through imputation, it is said to exist. Thus we can reconcile the two statements if we suppose that, in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Candrakīrti is speaking on the level of imputation and conventional reality (*saṃvṛtyā samāropya*).

This explanation becomes more plausible if we recall that in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Candrakīrti lays great stress on the idea of the Buddhist path. This is true, in fact, not only of the passage translated but also of the work as a whole, which deals with the ten *bhūmis* of the bodhisattva and the stage of Buddhahood. "In order to avoid frightening the hearer" into the nihilistic conclusion that the spiritual path is pointless, Candrakīrti says that a *svabhāva* of things exists. It is their ultimate reality, and the path is the means for comprehending it. According to the *Prasannapadā*, though, one eventually comes to realize – by means of the path – that the notion of existence through *svabhāva* and the corresponding notion of nonexistence are inapplicable to reality.

The second apparent contradiction occurs in the *Prasannapadā* when, after saying that *svabhāva* exists, Candrakīrti later says that there is no *svabhāva*. The first statement is explicitly made on the level of conventional truth; the second presumably is, since Candrakīrti does not want to assert either existence or nonexistence as ultimate truth. Thus the contradiction cannot be resolved by appealing to different levels of truth.

After the first of the two statements, Candrakīrti quotes *kārikā* eleven of chapter twenty-two of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*. In his commentary on that *kārikā*, in chapter twenty-two of the *Prasannapadā*, he explains that the Buddha has taught emptiness, non-emptiness, etc., on different occasions in accordance with the needs and capacities of various disciples. Similarly, we may suppose that the statement that *svabhāva* exists is designed here, as in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, to dispel any tendency to nihilistic negation (*apavāda*) of things. The statement that there is no *svabhāva* is designed to counter the opposite tendency to make the fact that things lack *svabhāva* itself a thing.

It might be objected that, even if this is the intention behind the statements, the statements themselves are still contradictory. One might reply that this is not a problem if the intention is understood. In this case, however, I think that more than this can be said. The two statements are not, in fact, contradictory because "*svabhāva*" does not mean the same thing in both.

To begin with, it seems to be implicit in what Candrakīrti has said that the *svabhāva* of an entity is normally considered to be some positive quality, rather than the mere absence of a quality. Moreover, we have the explicit definition of *svabhāva* as non-contingent and without dependence on another. Thus the statement that *svabhāva* does not exist means that none of the qualities of things can be their *svabhāva*, since things, and therefore all their qualities, are contingent and dependent on causes and conditions.

Now Candrakīrti observes that the fact that things are without *svabhāva* is, itself, invariably true and thus non-contingent. The fact that things lack *svabhāva* follows from their being dependent on causes and conditions; but it does not depend on the presence of some particular conditions, ráther than others. Thus the fact of the absence of *svabhāva* satisfies the explicit part of the definition of *svabhāva*! However, it differs from such candidates for *svabhāva* as the heat of fire in two ways: (1) Being purely negative, it does not satisfy the implicit condition that *svabhāva* be a positive quality. (2) It is not a quality of things, but a fact about qualities of things, namely, that none of them are *svabhāva*.

Candrakīrti discusses the first of these two differences, but not the second. He says that the imputed *svabhāva* is non-*svabhāva* "because of being a mere non-entity, since it is nothing at all". An absence is a non-entity; thus although we may speak of the absence of *svabhāva* in things as being their *svabhāva*, there is still no entity which is their *svabhāva*. The phrase about *svabhāva*'s becoming an object "by means of non-seeing" probably alludes to this. When we see the absence of *svabhāva*, we do not see any entity.

On the second point, if we say that the *svabhāva* of things is that they have no *svabhāva*, this is analogous to the paradox of the liar. Examples of this paradox are the sentences 'I am lying'. 'This sentence is false', etc., which seem to be true if they are false and false if they are true. Likewise, if lack of *svabhāva* is the *svabhāva* of things, then it seems that things have *svabhāva* if they do not have it and *vice versa*.

The paradox can be resolved by observing that here the *svabhāva* which things lack is a positive quality which would satisfy the definition of *svabhāva*. The *svabhāva* which things are said to have is the very fact that none of their qualities satisfy the definition of *svabhāva*. Thus the *svabhāva* which is affirmed belongs to a higher level of abstraction than the *svabhāva* which is negated. Since what is being negated is not the same as what is being affirmed, there is no paradox.

To sum up, we can distinguish five levels[31] in Candrakīrti's consideration of *svabhāva*:

(1) On the conventional level, the belief that reality is composed of entities possessing *svabhāva* is not questioned. On this level, it is correct to say that heat is the *svabhāva* of fire, since heat is invariably a property of fire.

(2) Next, it is denied that the conventional *svabhāva* is truly *svabhāva*. Things arise through dependence on causes and conditions. Therefore, they, and

all their qualities, are contingent and dependent; but *svabhāva* is defined to be non-contingent and independent.

(3) The fact that things lack *svabhāva* is invariably true and not contingent on any particular circumstances. Therefore, that fact itself could be said to be their *svabhāva*.

(4) The *svabhāva* of level three is purely negative. Thus it is not the same as the *svabhāva* considered on level one; it is, in fact, the negation of it.

(5) Finally, even to say that *svabhāva* does not exist is to imply that either oneself or one's audience is not entirely free from the belief in *svabhāva*. Therefore, ultimate truth, truth as it is for those who are free from misknowledge, cannot be expressed by asserting either the existence or the nonexistence of *svabhāva*.

Notes

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1 Bhattacharyya (1979); Mehta (1979); Sopa (1980); Sprung (1978); Sprung (1979); Wayman (1978); Wayman (1980).
2 Matsumoto (1979); Sprung (1973); Streng (1971); Sweet (1979).
3 De Jong (1972a); De Jong (1972b); May (1978).
4 Ruegg (1971).
5 *Iha yo dharmo yaṃ padārthaṃ na vyabhicarati sa tasya svabhāva iti vyapadīśyate, aparapratibaddhatvāt. Agnerauṣṇyaṃ hi loke tadavyabhicāritvātsvabhāva ityucyate. Tadevauṣṇyamapsūpalabhyamānaṃ parapratyayasambhūtatvātkṛtrimatvānna svabhāva iti*. B241–7 through 9.
6 B87–1, 2.
7 A228–9 through 11.
8 B58–1, 2. The *āryas*, "Noble Ones," are spiritually advanced persons, specifically, the Buddhas, the bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna (from the first *bhūmi* on), and the eight *āryapudgalas* of the Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna. Here the important point about the *āryas* is that they all have direct experience of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), the absence of *svabhāva* in things. See chapter one of the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, verse five ff. All those who are not *āryas* are called *bāla*, "spiritually immature."
9 A107–15.
10 *Yathāvadavasthitaṃ svabhāvaṃ prattipattā pratipattuṃ na samartha iti*. B444–3, 4.
11 A108–16 through 19. A108–18 has *so sor*. Read *so so* with D128–1–6, P124–2–2. Compare B493–11.
12 *Ācārya* is a title meaning 'learned teacher'.
13 *'di dag ni* (A306–6, D157–3–7, P151–2–5). I have read *'di dag gi*.
14 Identified by Tsongkhapa, 504–1.
15 Or 'intrinsic nature, dependent origination'. *Rang gi ngo bo rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba* (A307–15, D157–4–7, P151–3–6).
16 *De lta ba'i don du* (A307–19, P151–3–7). Derge has *de'i lta ba'i don du* (D158–1–1). Tsonkhapa has *de blta ba'i don du* (506–1).
17 Or 'besides, he is able to make this point accepted'. See Tsongkhapa 506–4, 5.
18 Read *me . . . tsha ba* with D158–1–3 and Tsongkhapa, 506–6.
19 *'byung ba'i* (D44–3–5, P42–3–5); missing in B260–11.

20 B261–2, 3 has *yathā hi taimirikāstimirapratyayādasantameva keśādisvabhāvaṃ sasvabhāvatvenābhiniviṣṭāḥ*. The Tibetan (D44–4–1, P42–4–1) appears to have *niḥsvabhāvameva keśādi svabhāvatvena*. I have read *niḥsvabhāvameva keśādi sasvabhāvatvena*, as both more intelligible and corresponding to the Sanskrit of the preceding sentence and the following clause.

21 Omit *parahitavyāpāraiḥ* (B261–9) with Tibetan (D44–4–4, 5; P42–4–5, 6).

22 B262–8, 9 has *niḥsvabhāvam*, "without *svabhāva*." The Tibetan (D44–4–7, P42–5–1) has *rang bzhin ma yin no*. Read with Tibetan.

23 *Yasya padārthasya yadātmīyaṃ rūpaṃ tattasya svabhāva iti vyapadīsyate. Kiṃca kasyātmīyaṃ yadyasyākṛtrimam*. B262–12 to 263–1.

24 Read *ca* after *akṛtimatvāt* in B265–2, with Tibetan (*dang*, D45–2–3, P43–1–6).

25 *Yenātmanā vigatāvidyātimirāṇāmāryāṇāmadarśanayogena viṣayatvamupayāti tadeva svarūpameṣāṃ svabhāva iti vyavasthāpyate*. B265–3 through 5.

26 *Sa caiṣa bhāvānāmanutpādātmakaḥ svabhāvo 'kiṃcittvenābhāvamātratvādasvabhāva eva* (B265–7, 8). The Tibetan translation (D45–2–5, P43–2–1) has *ngo bo med pa* for *asvabhāva*, apparently taking it as a *bahuvrīhi*.

27 Tibetan, *loc. cit.*, has *dngos po'i rang bzhin du yod pa ma yin no*, '[it] does not exist as the *svabhāva* of an entity'.

28 Bhattacharyya (1979), pp. 341–342.

29 A109–10 through A110–3.

30 B262–6.

31 Compare Sopa and Hopkins (1976), p. 122, three usages of *svabhāva*; Sprung (1979), p. 13, five points.

Bibliographical abbreviations

A *Madhyamakāvatāra of Candrakīrti*. Edited by Louis de la Vallée Poussin. Bibliotheca Buddhica IX. St. Pétersbourg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1912.

B *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās of Nāgārjuna, with the Prasannapadā of Candrakīrti*. Louis de la Vallée Poussin (ed.). Bibliotheca Buddhica IV. St. Pétersbourg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1913. As emended in J. W. De Jong (1978), 'Text-critical Notes on the *Prasannapadā*', *Indo-Iranian Journal* 20: 25–59, 217–252.

D *Sde Dge Tibetan Tripiṭaka Bstan Ḥgyur*. Vol. 7. K. Hayashima, J. Takasaki, Z. Yamaguchi, and Y. Ejima (eds.). Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kanko Kyokai, 1978.

P *The Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking Edition*. Vol. 98. D. T. Suzuki (ed.). Tokyo Kyoto: Tibetan Tripiṭaka Research Institute, 1957.

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Tsongkhapa. *Bstan bcos chen po dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dgongs pa rab gsal*, in *The Collected Works* (*Gsuṅ 'Bum*) *of Rje Tsoṅ-kha-pa Blo-bzaṅ-grags-pa*. Vol. 24. New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1979.

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47

BUDDHAPĀLITA'S EXPOSITION OF THE MĀDHYAMIKA

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I. Introduction

Buddhapālita is the earliest identifiable author whose commentary (*Buddhapālita-Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti*) on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* (MMK) survives today. (The *Akutobhayā* may well be older, but its authorship is disputed.) He was active probably around 500 A.D.[1] Tāranātha[2] tells us that he was born in South India and gives a very brief account of his life, but it is not clear how reliable his information is. Although both Tāranātha and the colophon to the Tibetan translation of the *Buddhapālita-Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti*[3] say that he composed commentaries on many works, only his commentary on the MMK has come down to us. Aside from a few very brief quotations in the *Prasannapadā*, it exists only in an early ninth-century Tibetan translation by Jñānagarbha and Cog ro Klu'i rgyal mtshan.

A portion of chapter two has been translated and edited by Musashi Tachikawa.[4] Chapter eighteen has been translated and edited by Christian Lindtner.[5] A translation of chapter one by Judit Fehér was published recently in *Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica* XXIX/1.[6] One should also mention Akira Saito's unpublished dissertation.[7]

Buddhapālita is best known to modern students of Buddhism as the object of Bhāvaviveka's criticism and Candrakīrti's defense. The main subject of controversy was Buddhapālita's use of *prasaṅga*, or *reductio ad absurdum*, arguments rather than independent syllogisms (*svatantra-anumāna*).[8] The followers of Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti became known as Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas, while those who followed Bhāvaviveka were called Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas.[9]

In this paper we shall take a different approach to Buddhapālita. We shall look at what he has to say about certain major themes of the Madhyamaka. (For the most part, the school is referred to as Madhyamaka; a follower of the school is a Mādhyamika.) Buddhapālita was not a great innovator. In his commentary, he stays close to the thought of Nāgārjuna as expressed in the MMK. Candrakīrti often, though not always, followed Buddhapālita's line of thought in his own

commentary on the MMK, the *Prasannapadā*. Not infrequently, he improved on Buddhapālita's arguments or clarified his explanations. Thus to those already familiar with Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, Buddhapālita presents few surprises.

Nevertheless, in addition to its historical importance, Buddhapālita's commentary contains a number of striking passages which set forth central themes of the Madhyamaka in a lucid and straightforward way. Indeed, his work's relative lack of the elaboration of Bhāvaviveka's commentary or the subtlety of Candrakīrti's often makes it clearer and more accessible to the modern reader. Moreover, for one seeking to understand Madhyamaka thought, Buddhapālita's exposition of the Madhyamaka is of interest in its own right.

It is a curious fact that Buddhapālita's commentary on the last five of the twenty-seven chapters of the MMK is nearly identical to the corresponding chapters of the *Akutobhayā*. (This is particularly true of the last four chapters.) The style and the brevity of these chapters much more resemble the first twenty-two chapters of the *Akutobhayā* than they do the first twenty-two chapters of Buddhapālita's commentary. Thus it seems likely than Buddhapālita, in fact, wrote only the first twenty-two chapters of the commentary ascribed to him. The remaining chapters were presumably taken from the *Akutobhayā* and added later. Hence I have quoted passages only from the first twenty-two chapters in this paper.

The quotations, together with discussion and commentary, have been organized under different headings. Since most of these topics are closely related, many of the quotations are relevant to more than one of them. Thus it has sometimes been necessary to refer to or even to repeat earlier quotations. The Tibetan text of the passages quoted is given at the end of the paper, along with references to the Peking and Derge editions. All translations in this paper are my own.

II. Dependent origination and nonorigination

Throughout the MMK, Nāgārjuna lays great stress on the notion of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), the observed fact that things originate in dependence on causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*). Dependent origination is, of course, a fundamental doctrine in early Buddhism. Thus in the *Mahānidāna Sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, the Buddha says, "Ānanda, this dependent origination is profound and looks profound."[10] And in the *Mahāhattipadopama Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, Sāriputta says, "This, indeed, was stated by the Blessed One: 'He who sees dependent origination sees the Dharma; he who sees the Dharma sees dependent origination.' "[11]

The most striking statement of the importance of dependent origination for the Mādhyamikas occurs in MMK 24–18:

> What dependent origination is, that we call emptiness (*śūnyatā*).
> That is dependent designation (*prajñaptir upādāya*); precisely that is the middle way.[12]

It may therefore come as a surprise to find that Nāgārjuna also speaks of nonorigination (*anutpāda*). More than that, he says that dependent origination is characterized by nonorigination![13] On the face of it, this seems to be a flat contradiction. If so, it is a contradiction which Nāgārjuna as a Mahāyānist cannot escape, for the Mahāyāna sūtras, especially those of the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) class, are full of references to the nonorigination of all dharmas.[14]

How then does Buddhapālita, as Nāgārjuna's commentator, deal with the apparent contradiction between dependent origination and nonorigination? On the one hand, like Nāgārjuna, he underlines the importance of dependent origination. Thus he refers to

> (1) . . . the teacher [Nāgārjuna], wishing to explain dependent origination, seeing as it really is the profundity of dependent origination . . .

He speaks of

> (2) . . . the supremely profound ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*)[15] called "dependent origination" . . .

Since dependent origination is the truth, the knowledge of it sets one free:

> (3) The teacher [Nāgārjuna], having a compassionate nature and seeing that beings are afflicted by various sufferings, wished to teach the real state (*yāthātathya*) of entities (*bhāva*) in order to liberate them. Therefore he undertook the teaching of dependent origination, because it has been said, "One who sees the unreal is bound; one who sees the real is liberated."[16]

On the other hand, Buddhapālita makes it clear that dependent origination has to be understood correctly. Some have made the mistake of taking the Buddha's teaching too literally:

> (4) It is true that the Tathāgata himself has explained and taught dependent origination. Nevertheless, he explained and taught it according to worldly convention (*lokavyavahāra*) by means of expressions such as "origination." In that connection, even to this day, some whose minds are attached to mere verbal expressions do not understand the supremely profound dependent origination, but think that entities indeed exist because their origination and cessation and going and coming are spoken of . . . In order to teach them the intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of dependent origination, the teacher [Nāgārjuna] has composed this [treatise], which is connected with [both] reasoning (*yukti*) and scripture (*āgama*).

Here Buddhapālita probably has in mind non-Mahāyāna Buddhists in general and especially the Vaibhāṣikas with their pronounced tendency to make the Buddha's words stand for ontologically real entities.

Buddhapālita reiterates the point that not all statements of the Buddha can be taken literally:

> (5) Therefore the blessed Buddhas have said various things according to worldly convention. Therefore those who wish to see reality (*tattva*) should not be attached to what has been said according to worldly convention but should grasp just that which is reality.

Applying this principle to a specific case, he says,

> (6) The Blessed One has taught the three times [i.e., past, present, and future] according to worldly convention; but in reality the three times are not possible.

Even if we grant that the teaching of dependent origination cannot be taken quite literally, Buddhapālita has so far not told us how it *is* to be taken; and we seem to be no closer to understanding how dependent origination can be reconciled with nonorigination. Here the crucial point is that, for the Mādhyamikas, the fact that a thing has originated in dependence on causes and conditions implies that it has no intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). Because its existence depends on things other than itself, it is nothing in itself, that is, when it is considered in isolation from everything else. If we focus on a particular thing in an effort to distinguish its own intrinsic nature from that of other things, we find that it disappears. The process of excluding from consideration everything but the thing in question removes the very conditions on which its existence depends. Thus we do not find any inherent identity in it, any intrinsic nature which makes it what it is and which is independent of anything else.

What is probably Nāgārjuna's clearest statement of this point occurs in MMK 15–1 and 2:

> The arising of intrinsic nature by means of causes and conditions is not logically possible (*yukta*).
> An intrinsic nature arisen from causes and conditions would be artificial (*kṛtaka*). [15–1]
> But how will intrinsic nature be called artificial?
> For intrinsic nature is noncontingent (*akṛtrima*) and without dependence on another.[17] [15–2]

Nāgārjuna also says, in MMK 7–16ab,

> Whatever comes about dependently is tranquil by intrinsic nature (*śāntaṃ svabhāvataḥ*).[18]

Here Buddhapālita glosses "tranquil by intrinsic nature" as

> (7) . . . without intrinsic nature, empty of intrinsic nature . . .

As we have seen in quotations (1), (2), and (4), Buddhapālita characterizes dependent origination as "profound." While this is no doubt an allusion to the Buddha's statement quoted earlier, Buddhapālita seems to understand the profundity of dependent origination in a specifically Madhyamaka sense, as referring to the connection between dependent origination and the absence of intrinsic nature. This is especially clear in quotation (4).

Buddhapālita uses the principle that dependent origination implies lack of intrinsic nature in a number of particular cases. For example, he says,

> (8) Because action (*karman*) arises from the afflictions (*kleśa*)[19] as [its] cause and the afflictions arise from error (*viparyāsa* or *viparyaya*) as [their] cause, therefore [we] say that action and the afflictions are without intrinsic nature.

In another passage, Buddhapālita explains these causal relationships in more detail:

> (9) Those actions and afflictions, moreover, arise from false conceptualization (*abhūtavikalpa*) but do not exist by intrinsic nature. An affliction arises from superficial conceptualization (*ayoniśo vikalpa*), for even in regard to one single object, some will desire, some will hate, and some will be confused. Therefore, afflictions arise from conceptualization. What the body, speech, and mind (*manas*) of one whose mind (*citta*) is afflicted perform is called "action" . . . Therefore action and afflictions arise from false conceptualization as [their] cause.

According to the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, the actions which one performs under the influence of the afflictions cause one to be reborn in saṃsāra. Thus action and the afflictions can be said to be the cause of the bodies in which one is reborn. With regard to bodies, Buddhapālita says:

> (10) We have shown that the causes of bodies, that action and those afflictions, are empty of intrinsic nature because they are dependently originated. It must be held that a result possesses the nature of the qualities of [its] cause. Therefore if the causes of a body, action and the afflictions, are themselves empty, they being empty, how can one say that a body has intrinsic nature?

The term "appropriation" (*upādāna*) is sometimes used to designate the five *skandhas*, the five psychophysical aggregates[20] which constitute an individual's

body and mind. They are "appropriated" as the basis for imputing a self although, in fact, no permanent, unitary self exists. Once again, Buddhapālita infers their lack of intrinsic nature from the fact that they originate in dependence on causes and conditions:

(11) Even that appropriation, which [you] suppose exists, does not exist [by] intrinsic nature because it is dependently originated.

Thus Buddhapālita is critical of those who accept dependent origination but do not see that it implies that there is no intrinsic nature in things:

(12) Do you not see the horse even though you are mounted on it? You say that entities are dependently originated, but you do not see their lack of intrinsic nature.

Again, Buddhapālita is presumably thinking of the Vaibhāṣikas and other non-Mahāyāna Buddhists. And it is probably with them in mind that he says,

(13) It is not possible for the proponents of dependent origination [to say] that that [which is called] "this action" has arisen from causal conditions; nor is it possible for the proponents of origination without a cause [to say] that that [which is called] "this action" has arisen without a cause.

In the preceding passage, the "proponents of dependent origination" (*pratītyasamutpādavādins*) are evidently those who accept the principle of dependent origination but not that of emptiness, the absence of intrinsic nature in things. Elsewhere Buddhapālita seems to equate the "proponents of dependent origination" with the Mādhyamikas themselves. Thus he says,

(14) Therefore, for those who see entities and nonentities, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and bondage and liberation are not possible, because the views of permanence and annihilation[21] follow [if there are entities and nonentities]; but saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, called "bondage and liberation," are established only for the proponent of dependent origination.

Likewise he says,

(15) For the proponents of dependent origination, the entity which is originating (*utpādyamānabhāva*) does not exist; and the origination (*utpatti*) of the entity which is originating does not exist.

Moreover, when Buddhapālita refers to dependent origination, he usually takes it for granted that it implies, indeed, is virtually identical with, absence of

intrinsic nature. Thus he goes on to explain "does not exist" in quotation (15) as meaning "empty of intrinsic nature." And he also says,

> (16) . . . all conceptual constructions (*rtog pa*, probably *kalpanā*) of entities and nonentities lead to the faults of permanence and annihilation; but dependent origination stands outside of views of entities and nonentities. Therefore it is free from the faults of the views of permanence and annihilation.

And similarly,

> (17) Therefore we teach that because [the *skandhas*, *dhātus* and *āyatanas*][22] are dependently originated, they are free from the faults of existence and nonexistence, not annihilated [and] not eternal . . .

Thus having said in quotation (4) that Nāgārjuna composed the MMK in order to explain dependent origination, Buddhapālita can also say without any inconsistency,

> (18) Therefore the teacher [Nāgārjuna] composed this [treatise] in order to explain entities' lack of intrinsic nature.

And having said in quotation (3) that Nāgārjuna taught dependent origination because he wished to teach the real state of entities, Buddhapālita goes on to ask,

> (19) *Question*: What is the real state of entities?
> *Answer*: [Their] lack of intrinsic nature.

Thus from Buddhapālita's Mādhyamika perspective, dependent origination and absence of intrinsic nature are not two separate facts but are rather aspects of the same fact.

But what is the connection between lack of intrinsic nature and nonorigination? And in what sense are things both dependently originated and nonoriginated? Buddhapālita's clearest answer to these questions occurs in his commentary on MMK 17–21 ab:

> (20) Because action (*karman*) lacks intrinsic nature, therefore it does not originate. For if the intrinsic nature of action existed, [its] origination would also be possible [so that one could say,] "This is the origination of action." But if the intrinsic nature of action does not exist, what would originate? But even if it originates, it would not originate as intrinsic nature. That which does not originate as intrinsic nature is not action, since it lacks the intrinsic nature of action.

The fact, drawn from ordinary experience, that things originate in dependence on causes and conditions means that they do not originate having intrinsic nature. Thus, as far as intrinsic nature is concerned, nothing at all originates. Hence on the everyday, conventional level, it is legitimate to say that something originates in dependence on its various causes. But if we look for the independent essence of that "something," for that which makes it what it really is independently of anything else, we find nothing at all. It simply does not exist as an independent, self-contained entity. Therefore, in that sense, there is no such thing and no origination of it.

If there is no origination, there is no cessation, either, since there is nothing which could cease. In chapter seventeen of the MMK, Nāgārjuna criticizes a Buddhist Abhidharma school which took the "nondisappearance" (*avipraṇāśa*) of action, of which the Buddha spoke, to be a distinct entity. Buddhapālita's commentary here is illuminating:

> (21) Therefore, not having understood reality (*tattvārtha*), having become attached to the mere word "nondisappearance" as an entity, [you] have uttered so many numerous and varied and worthless [statements]. For action is simply without intrinsic nature. Because it is without intrinsic nature, therefore it is unoriginated; and because it is unoriginated, therefore it does not disappear.

Buddhapālita reiterates that lack of intrinsic nature implies nonorigination and noncessation. He refers to

> (22) ... one who sees that all entities are unoriginated and unceasing because they are empty of intrinsic nature ...

And conversely,

> (23) ... by saying that it is without beginning or end, the Blessed One taught that saṃsāra, also, is empty of intrinsic nature. For if any entity called "saṃsāra" existed, it would undoubtedly have both a beginning and an end ... Therefore, because [the Buddha] said that it is without beginning or end, no entity called "saṃsāra" is possible.

Both Nāgārjuna and Buddhapālita often make statements which appear to be flat negations of origination, without any qualifications such as "by intrinsic nature." The same holds true of action, agent, and many other objects of negation. Such statements have to be understood in the overall context of Madhyamaka philosophy. In his commentary on MMK 1–1, Buddhapālita says,

(24) Thus because the origination of entities is not possible in any way, therefore, since origination does not exist, the expression "origination" is a mere conventional usage (*vyavahāra*).

He concludes his commentary on chapter one of the MMK by saying,

(25) ... it is established that the expression "origination" is a mere conventional usage.

Thus Buddhapālita does not wish to abolish all talk of things' originating, but to relegate it to the conventional level. Such notions are useful as long as they are not pushed too far. It is only when we ask what is ultimately real that we are led to the conclusion that there is no real origination since no intrinsic nature ever originates.

III. Intrinsic nature

While we have concluded our study of Buddhapālita's explanation of the relation between dependent origination and nonorigination, several questions remain. Though Buddhapālita almost always negates intrinsic nature, the alert reader may have noticed that in quotation (4), he says that Nāgārjuna wrote the MMK in order to teach the intrinsic nature of dependent origination. Moreover, he concludes his commentary on MMK 18–9 by saying,

(26) Therefore one should understand that the defining characteristic of reality (*tattva-lakṣaṇa*) is the cognition of such an intrinsic nature, known by oneself, not learned from another (*apara-pratyaya*).

What are we to make to these apparent affirmations of intrinsic nature? Buddhapālita does not explain; but the idea seems to be that things' very lack of intrinsic nature is, in a sense, their intrinsic nature. Nāgārjuna has said in MMK 15–2 (quoted earlier) that intrinsic nature is noncontingent and not dependent on another. Moreover, he says in MMK 15–8cd,

Indeed, alteration (*anyathābhāva*) of intrinsic nature (*prakṛti* = *svabhāva* here) is never possible.[23]

Commenting on this verse, Buddhapālita says,

(27) For the opposite (*pratipakṣa*) of change is intrinsic nature. Therefore intrinsic nature must be unchanging, permanent; but alteration appears in entities. Therefore existence by intrinsic nature is not possible for them.

Thus since they are contingent, dependent, and changing, entities do not exist by intrinsic nature. On the other hand, their lack of intrinsic nature is a permanent, albeit negative, fact. Though it depends on the general principle of dependent origination, it is not dependent on any particular circumstances. It is always the case that all entities lack intrinsic nature. Thus this fact itself, the absence of intrinsic nature in things, fits the definition of intrinsic nature![24]

Hence Buddhapālita can equate things' lack of intrinsic nature with reality (*tattva*):

> (28) If to see entities and nonentities were to see reality, there would be no one who would not see reality; therefore that is not the vision of reality. Therefore entities' lack of intrinsic nature is reality, and only by seeing that will one be liberated.

And likewise he says,

> (29) Thus because the view of existence and nonexistence of entities will have many faults, therefore that "lack of intrinsic nature of entities" is the vision of reality; it is the middle path; and just that is the attainment of ultimate reality (*paramārtha*).

Finally, we have already seen in quotation (19) that Buddhapālita says that the real state of entities is their lack of intrinsic nature. Thus the very lack of any ultimate reality in things serves as their ultimate reality; and when one finds no ultimate reality in any entity, the quest for reality is fulfilled.

IV. The two truths

We have already seen references to "convention" versus "reality" in quotations (4), (5), and (6). This distinction is based on the well-known Madhyamaka doctrine of the two truths, the truth of ultimate reality (*paramārthasatya*) and the truth of relative or superficial reality (*saṃvṛtisatya*). Nāgārjuna's classic statement on the two truths occurs in MMK 24–8, 9, 10. Unfortunately, as explained earlier, we apparently have no commentary by Buddhapālita on chapter twenty-four. Nevertheless, in his commentary on the first twenty-two chapters, Buddhapālita makes a number of statements related to the idea of the two truths.

As far as ultimate truth is concerned, we have seen that the lack of intrinsic nature in things is said to be reality (*tattva*) in quotations (28) and (29) and the real state (*yāthātathya*) of entities in quotation (19). In quotation (2), dependent origination is said to be ultimate truth; but we have shown how dependent origination and absence of intrinsic nature are inseparable for the Mādhyamikas. Likewise, Buddhapālita says of emptiness (meaning the fact that things are empty of intrinsic nature),

> (30) Therefore emptiness is reality . . .

On the other hand, one must bear in mind that ultimate reality is beyond the reach of conceptual formulation. As Buddhapālita said in quotation (26), it must be directly experienced for oneself. Thus ultimate reality cannot, strictly speaking, be captured by verbal designations such as "emptiness," "lack of intrinsic nature," and the like. Buddhapālita says, paraphrasing MMK 22–11,

(31) "Empty" should not be said; nor should "nonempty" be said; nor should "both empty and nonempty" and "neither empty nor nonempty" be said. [But] they are said for the sake of rejecting false conceptualizations (*abhūtasaṃkalpa*) and for the sake of designating (*prajñapti*) ultimate reality (*paramārthatattva*).

Likewise, in a long commentary on MMK 13–8, Buddhapālita states that emptiness is a mere expression, a name for the cessation of views about entities, and that

(32) . . . there is not any entity called "emptiness."

He concludes by saying,

(33) As for those who are attached to emptiness as an entity, that attachment cannot be removed by anything else. For example, if someone is told that there is nothing and says, "Give [me] that same nothing!" how can he be made to grasp the nonexistence [of any gift for him]? . . . Those who see that even emptiness is empty see reality; for them, emptiness is accomplished.

As for conventional truth, Buddhapālita says,

(34) It is established that the appearance of entities is like a magical illusion, a mirage, a city of the *gandharvas*, or a reflection.

If one claims that the existence of real entities is established by direct perception, Buddhapālita replies,

(35) Even that which is called "apprehension by direct perception" (*pratyakṣopalabdhi*) [or "apprehension of the immediately evident"] is seeing, like seeing mirages and dreams due to the fault of one's own confused mind; but here there is nothing real at all. In order to remove the attachment, "this is real (*satya*)," the Blessed One has said . . .

Thus the conventional truth is not ultimately true. Nevertheless, the Mādhyamikas do not propose to abolish the conventional truth but to show that it is

merely conventional. Here Buddhapālita's commentary on MMK 14–7ab, where he discusses the concept of "difference," is instructive:

(36) Dependent origination has the following nature: To begin with, because [one thing] is called "different" in dependence on [something] different [from it], therefore, according to worldly convention, it is said to be "different" ... Because a jar's "difference" in relation to a straw mat is relative to the straw mat, because it is dependent on the straw mat and not established by itself, [therefore] difference does not exist in the jar. Difference, being incompatible with nondifference, also does not exist in an isolated, "nondifferent" jar which is unrelated to a straw mat. Therefore, according to ultimate reality, it is said that difference does not exist.

Things that exist in relation to each other are real enough conventionally. They are not real ultimately because they do not exist by their own intrinsic natures. In his commentary on MMK 19–4, Buddhapālita considers a number of relative categories: past, present, and future; best, middling, and worst; beginning, middle, and end; far and near; former and later; oneness and separateness; identity and difference; cause and result; long and short; small and large; self and nonself; conditioned and unconditioned; one and two and many. He concludes by saying,

(37) Therefore all those, too, are not established by themselves in reality. They are stated according to worldly convention.

While conventional reality cannot claim ultimate validity, it must be acknowledged on its own level. Buddhapālita remarks that

(38) ... all expressions are not possible. [But] they are also possible according to worldly convention.

Therefore, as we saw in quotations (4), (5), and (6), the Buddha often teaches according to worldly convention. Otherwise, he could not communicate with people who understand nothing else. Commenting on MMK 18–8ab, Buddhapālita says,

(39) ... the Blessed One, also, though he saw that entities are empty of intrinsic nature, said, "This is real (*tathya*); this is unreal; this is both real and unreal."

For the Mādhyamika, the understanding of emptiness does not lead to a refusal to deal with conventional reality (which would scarcely be compatible with Mahāyānist compassion) but to nonattachment. Buddhapālita says,

(40) For us, engaging in conventional activities (*tha snyad byed pa*) without attachment to existence and nonexistence, it is not the case that [liberation] is impossible.

While conventional truth has to be recognized in conventional matters, it is no criterion of ultimate truth. When one inquires into ultimate truth, stricter standards are necessary. As we have seen, on the conventional level it is sufficient for things to be established in relation to each other. When one seeks for ultimate reality, one seeks for things that exist by intrinsic nature. Thus Buddhapālita sometimes uses the phrase "when one examines how things really are" (*yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du brtags na*) to indicate that the object of investigation is ultimate truth, not conventional validity. He also remarks,

(41) Because this is an investigation into reality (*de kho na bsam pa*, probably *tattvacintā*), what is the use of [arguing on the basis of] worldly expressions here . . .?

The following passage also clarifies the distinction between the two levels of investigation, the conventional and the ultimate:

(42) According to that same worldly superficial truth (*lokasaṃvṛti-satya*) by which it is said, "The jar exists; the grass hut exists," it is also said that they are impermanent: "The jar is broken; the grass hut is burned." When one investigates reality, then the jar and the grass hut are not possible since they are dependent designations. How would it be possible for them to be broken or burned? Moreover, the Tathāgata, also, is said to be impermanent according to worldly superficial reality (*lokasaṃvṛti*): "The Tathāgata is old; the Tathāgata has passed into nirvāṇa." When one investigates according to ultimate reality (*paramārthatas*), then the Tathāgata himself is not possible. How could his old age and nirvāṇa be possible?

V. Dependent designation

In MMK 24–18, as we have seen, Nāgārjuna equates emptiness not only with dependent origination but also with dependent designation (*upādāyaprajñapti*). "Dependent designation" refers to the principle that names and concepts are imposed on reality, rather than simply corresponding to it. Candrakīrti[25] gives the example of a cart which is designated in dependence on its parts, such as the wheels, the axles, and so on, but does not originate by its own intrinsic nature. (Once again, it is unfortunate that we do not have Buddhapālita's commentary on chapter twenty-four.) Similarly, the self or person is designated in dependence on the five *skandhas* or psychophysical aggregates.

Buddhapālita often uses the idea of dependent designation instead of or in addition to dependent origination. As with dependent origination, dependent designation is incompatible with existence by intrinsic nature:

(43) If the Buddha is designated in dependence on [his] *skandhas*, doesn't that mean that the Buddha does not exist by intrinsic nature? For what use does something which [already] exists by intrinsic nature have for also being designated dependently? It would be designated by just that which is its intrinsic nature. Because that [Buddha] is without intrinsic nature, therefore he is designated by means of [his] appropriation. Therefore, the Tathāgata does not exist by intrinsic nature.

This is true not just for the Buddha, but also for the whole world:

(44) Because the Tathāgata is designated in dependence on [his] *skandhas* but is not established by himself, therefore he has no intrinsic nature. These worlds, also, are designated in dependence on this and that; but they are not established by themselves at all; therefore the world also, like the Tathāgata, is without intrinsic nature.

The fact that something is designated dependently excludes its being established by intrinsic nature. Nevertheless, the principle of dependent designation does establish things in the only way in which they can be established, that is, as valid conventionally but not ultimately. Buddhapālita asserts,

(45) Therefore, one should grasp that which we have thoroughly ascertained: An entity is a dependent designation. Thus the teachings about agent, action, result, experiencer [of the result], affliction, and body are possible; but the faults of permanence and annihilation will not follow; and also saṃsāra is established.

In quotation (14), Buddhapālita made a similar statement about dependent origination.

Dependent origination or dependent designation establishes things as existing in relation to each other but not by intrinsic nature; and a relative, conventional existence is the most that things can possess. Buddhapālita's commentary following MMK 8–12 emphasizes these points:

(46) The agent depends on the action, is based on the action (*las la gnas*); in relation to the action, [he] is designated as and said to be an agent. The action of that [agent] also arises in dependence on that same agent; and it is designated as and said to be the action

of that [agent]. Therefore those two are designated in relation [to each other]; but they have no establishment or nonestablishment by intrinsic nature [or: "no establishment by intrinsic nature or nonestablishment"]. Therefore since, in that way, those two are not maintained to be existent or nonexistent, [this] is designated as the middle way. Apart from that designation, we see no other defining characteristic of the establishment of those two.

The same analysis is applied to the "appropriator" and the "appropriation," that is, the self and the five *skandhas*:

(47) . . . as the agent is designated in dependence on the action, so the appropriator, also, is designated in dependence on the appropriation. As the action is designated in dependence on that same agent, so the appropriation, also, is designated in dependence on that same appropriator. For those two [i.e., the appropriator and the appropriation], also, we see no defining characteristic of establishment apart from that.

Time, also, is dependently designated but does not exist as an independent entity. Buddhapālita says,

(48) If those, former and later and so on, are the marks (*liṅga*) of time, in that case, time is designated simply in dependence on an entity; but it is not established by itself.

He concludes his commentary on chapter nineteen, "Examination of Time," by saying,

(49) Therefore one should understand that there is not any entity called "time;" it is established as a dependent designation.

We should bear in mind that dependent designation does not establish the real existence of anything, but only its conventional, relative existence. Thus Buddhapālita says in his commentary on MMK 22–8,

(50) When the Tathāgata is sought for in five ways[26] in that same appropriation by which he is designated, [one finds that] he does not exist in the appropriation, [since he is] inexpressible as being identical to or different from [it]. [Then] how can it be said that the Tathāgata exists? Therefore it is not possible [to have both] dependent designation and existence.

Here the argument is that real entities, possessing intrinsic nature, would have to be identical or different. As Buddhapālita puts it,

(51) Those two things which are not established as being identical or different, are not established, because establishment in a [manner] different from those two [alternatives] is not possible.

On the other hand, something which is dependently designated cannot be held to be identical to or different from anything, since it has no intrinsic nature:

(52) For us, dependently designated entities, which are empty of intrinsic nature and are like magical illusions and mirages and reflections, have no identity or difference. To what would that entity belong? From what would it be different?

If we are to use the dependently designated's lack of identity and difference to prove that it lacks intrinsic nature, we cannot, at the same time, use lack of intrinsic nature to prove lack of identity and difference. Thus we need another argument to show that something which is dependently designated is not identical to or different from its basis of designation. In the following passage, Buddhapālita puts such an argument into the mouth of a hapless opponent:

(53) *Objection:* . . . The appropriator and the appropriation are not said to be identical or different. To begin with, they are not said to be identical because the agent-noun is different [from the noun denoting the action or the object of the action]. Nor are they said to be different, because they are not established separately. Therefore both exist, but they cannot be said to be identical or different.

Answer: Do you call an enemy as a witness, with the idea [that he is] a friend? You undertake to establish the appropriator and the appropriation by means of that same [fact] due to which it is impossible to establish them! For if an appropriation and an appropriator existed, they would undoubtedly be either identical or different. How could those which do not exist either as identical or as different exist in [some] other way? Therefore the appropriation does not exist, and the appropriator also does not exist. Even if one speaks of the appropriator and the appropriation according to convention, it must be said that they are neither identical nor different . . .

Finally, it should be pointed out that in MMK 18–10 and Buddhapālita's commentary on it, an argument is made that something which arises in dependence on another thing is not identical to or different from it. Therefore, once again, parallel arguments are made concerning dependent origination and dependent designation.

VI. Nihilism and Madhyamaka

Both ancient and modern critics of the Madhyamaka have charged that it is nihilistic. They hold that the doctrine of emptiness amounts to a negation of everything. If everything lacks intrinsic nature, nothing exists in any real sense. This undermines the ontological basis of the world of ordinary experience. Moreover, it makes any kind of spiritual life impossible since there can be no transcendent entity to serve as the goal of spiritual practice. We are left with an unreal, meaningless existence in an unreal, meaningless world.

In his commentary following MMK 18–7, Buddhapālita has an opponent raise the issue of nihilism in classical Indian terms:

> (54) *Objection*: What difference is there between one who has the view that "this world does not exist; the other world does not exist; apparitionally born beings do not exist" and so on and one who has the view that all entities are unoriginated and unceasing?

The ensuing discussion is rather long; and we shall summarize and paraphrase, rather than translate, most of it. Buddhapālita replies that there is a great difference. The nihilist speaks without really having seen, without really having experienced any "nonexistence" of the world, etc. On the other hand, one who has seen, who has had a direct experience of the fact that things are unoriginated and unceasing because they are empty of intrinsic nature speaks of what he knows. The nihilist is merely uttering words whereas the Mādhyamika's statements are based on actual knowledge. Buddhapālita gives the example of two witnesses in court. Both give the same testimony; but one actually saw the events in question, whereas the other testifies because he has been bribed or because he is partial to one side in the case. The second witness, though his words are correct, is considered to be a liar because he has no actual knowledge of the events of which he speaks.

So far it might seem that Buddhapālita is simply saying that the Mādhyamika is a "knowledgeable nihilist." His position is the same as that of the nihilist, but it is based on correct knowledge rather speculation. What Buddhapālita goes on to say, though a little difficult, will shed some light on this issue:

> (55) We see that entities are nonexistent like the horns of a hare; but in order to avoid faults of speech, we do not say "neither existence or nonexistence." For we speak according to seeing that existence and nonexistence are like reflections because they are dependently originated.

The first statement, that entities are nonexistent like the horns of a hare (which do not exist even conventionally), seems to support the idea that the Mādhyamika's position differs little, if at all, from that of the nihilist. Neverthe-

less, such a statement has to be understood in the context of the whole passage and, even more, of Buddhapālita's entire commentary. Thus the passage ends with Buddhapālita's saying that existence and nonexistence are like reflections because they are dependently originated. Here Buddhapālita evidently rejects the idea that the Mādhyamika's position is a simple affirmation of nonexistence. Perhaps he meant in the first sentence that entities in no way exist by intrinsic nature, since they lack intrinsic nature, rather than that they are nonexistent in every sense.

If this is Buddhapālita's position, what fault is there in his saying "neither existence nor nonexistence"? Presumably he is seeking to avoid the fourth of the four alternatives (*catuṣkoṭi*) which the Mādhyamikas reject. In terms of existence and nonexistence, the four alternatives are: existence; nonexistence; both existence and nonexistence; and neither existence nor nonexistence. In many ways, the fourth alternative is similar to what the Mādhyamika wants to say. It is rejected probably because it might be taken to mean that there is an entity to which neither the predicate of existence nor the predicate of nonexistence applies. This is not acceptable since it violates the law of the excluded middle and since the whole purpose of the Madhyamaka dialectic is to rule out *any* sort of entity.[27]

In quotation (55), Buddhapālita said that existence and nonexistence are like reflections because they are dependently originated. Throughout his commentary, Buddhapālita makes the point that the fundamental Madhyamaka principles of dependent origination, dependent designation, and emptiness are not doctrines of nonexistence. With regard to dependent designation, we have the following exchange between Buddhapālita and a hypothetical opponent:

> (56) *Objection*: If time does not exist and cause and effect and the group [of cause and conditions: *sāmagrī*] also do not exist, what other exists? Therefore that [view of yours] is just nihilism (*nāstivāda*).
>
> *Answer*: It is not. Your conceptual construction that time and so on exist by intrinsic nature is simply not possible, but they are established as dependent designations.

Well, what can we say about the existence or nonexistence of things which are dependently designated? Strictly speaking, nothing, according to Buddhapālita:

> (57) Therefore the meaning of dependent designation is precisely that an entity which is dependently designated cannot be said to be existent or nonexistent because it is completely empty of intrinsic nature. [But] there is no fault in a conventional statement (*tha snyad kyi tshig*, probably *vyavahāra-vacana* or *-vākya*).

In the following passage, Buddhapālita spells out in more detail why a dependently designated thing cannot be said to be either existent or nonexistent. This discussion is couched in terms of the Tathāgata and his *skandhas* or appropriation:

(58) How is it logically possible to say that the Tathāgata, who is dependently designated, either exists or does not exist? For if a Tathāgata existed, he would just exist, even without an appropriation, but he does not exist without an appropriation. How can one who does not exist without an appropriation be said to exist? How, too, can a Tathāgata who is dependently designated be said not to exist? For a nonexisting *uḍumbara* flower cannot be designated.

With regard to an agent and his action, Buddhapālita says,

(59) We do not say that agent and action are nonexistent. We have rejected the conceptual construction that their activity (*kriyā*) is really existent (*sadbhūta*) or really nonexistent. We maintain that agent and action are dependent designations . . . those two are not maintained to be either existent or nonexistent . . .

Likewise, with regard to a person and his six sense faculties (the five physical senses plus the mind), Buddhapālita says,

(60) No [person] who is established by himself – [so that one could say,] "He is this" – exists when he is sought for in every way, [whether he is supposed to exist] prior to the visual faculty, etc., or at the same time as the visual faculty, etc., or at a time later than the visual faculty, etc. The suppositions that he is designated as existent or as nonexistent by means of the visual faculty, etc., do not apply to that [person]. To begin with, because he is not established by himself, how can it be said that he exists? Also, because he is made manifest by the visual faculty, etc., how can it be said that he does not exist? Therefore, in his case, the suppositions that he exists or does not exist are not possible. Therefore, like agent and action, that appropriation [i.e., the sense faculties and so on] is also simply designated; but apart from that, no other establishment [of it] is possible.

Thus Buddhapālita is at pains to insist that the principle of dependent designation establishes neither real existence nor real nonexistence. Real existence would require that things not depend on anything else for their existence. Real nonexistence would require that things not even appear. Dependently des-

ignated things, however, appear in dependence on other things, which are themselves dependently designated. Because, in the sense stated, neither existence nor nonexistence is asserted, Madhyamaka is not a doctrine of nihilism, that is, of nonexistence. In another sense, as we have seen, Mādhyamikas deny that things exist by intrinsic nature but assert that they can nevertheless be said to exist conventionally. This is simply a different verbal formulation of the same idea.

Buddhapālita also discusses the question of existence and nonexistence as it relates to dependent origination, as well as dependent designation. Sometimes, in fact, he uses a formulation which combines elements of both:

> (61) . . . by this dependent origination, it is designated as an entity according to causes and conditions; but entities do not exist by intrinsic nature . . .

And similarly in the following passage,

> (62) The teaching of the blessed Buddhas is that an entity is simply designated due to causes and conditions, but it does not exist or not exist.

Speaking purely in terms of dependent origination, Buddhapālita, in a passage quoted in part earlier, asserts that the Mādhyamikas propound neither existence nor nonexistence:

> (63) We do not say that the *skandhas, dhātus*, and *āyatanas* are nonexistent. Rather we reject the doctrine that they exist. Both [existence and nonexistence] have great faults . . . Therefore we teach that because [the *skandhas, dhātus*, and *āyatanas*] are dependently originated, they are free from the faults of existence and nonexistence, not annihilated [and] not permanent; but we do not say that they are nonexistent.

Likewise, he asks rhetorically,

> (64) How is it possible to say that the dependently originated exists or does not exist?

In his commentary on MMK 12–8, Buddhapālita denies that the Mādhyamikas hold that suffering (*duḥkha*) is nonexistent; rather, they say that it is dependently originated. Moreover, according to quotation (55), existence and nonexistence are like reflections because they are dependently originated. Thus Buddhapālita obviously distinguishes between the ontological status of dependently originated things, on the one hand, and real existence or nonexistence, on

the other. The nature of the distinction, though, is not so clearly spelled out as it was in the case of dependent designation.

Buddhāpalita also holds that emptiness is different from both existence and nonexistence. Thus he says in his commentary on MMK 18–8cd,

> (65) How can it be said that entities which are empty of intrinsic nature, which are like magical illusions and dreams and mirages and reflections and echoes, are real (*tathya*) or unreal? Therefore that [i.e., "not real, not unreal"] is the teaching of the blessed Buddhas, free from the faults of existence and nonexistence, not in common with any Tirthakāras [i.e., non-Buddhists], elucidating ultimate reality (*paramārtha*).

Likewise, in his commentary on MMK 13–2, with regard to the Buddha's statement that all conditioned things are false (*mṛṣa*), Buddhapālita says,

> (66) Therefore, by saying "false," [the Buddha] did not teach that entities do not exist. That statement by the Blessed One . . . that what is deceptive (*moṣadharman*) is false teaches entities' emptiness of intrinsic nature, which is not understood by any Tirthakāras [and] is free from the faults of existence and nonexistence.

Occasionally, Buddhapālita seems to say that emptines implies or is eqivalent to nonexistence. A case in point is his commentary on MMK 20–18, in which he argues that an empty result of a cause cannot be said to arise or cease:

> (67) How will that result, which is empty of intrinsic nature [and] not established by itself, arise? How will it cease? But if one supposes that that result, even though it is empty of intrinsic nature, arises and ceases, to that [the following] must be said: Does something else, apart from the nature of the result, arise and cease? But if something else, apart from the nature of the result, arises, what would that do for the result? For the "non-result" which arises would not be the result. Therefore, even if one supposes that the result is empty, because it *does not exist* [my emphasis], it would also follow that it is unceasing and unoriginated; [but] that, also, is not accepted [by you]. Therefore an empty result, also, will not arise; nor will it cease.

In MMK 21–9ab and its commentary, an almost identical argument is made, except that the terms used for origination and cessation are *saṃbhava* and *vibhava*, rather than *utpāda* and *nirodha*. Here, too, "empty" seems to imply "nonexistent;" but then "nonexistent" is immediately equated with "nonexistent by intrinsic nature." (Again, I have supplied the emphasis.)

(68) To begin with, it is not possible for an entity which is empty of intrinsic nature to have origination and cessation. Why? Because it *does not exist*. For how could what *does not exist by intrinsic nature* have those [i.e., origination and cessation]? How could it be said that "something arises, something ceases," in reference to that which lacks even the conventional designation "this" because it *does not exist by intrinsic nature*? Therefore origination and cessation are not possible for what is empty.

Thus even in these passages, Buddhapālita evidently equates "emptiness" with "nonexistence by intrinsic nature" rather than with "nonexistence" pure and simple. In fact, not only Buddhapālita but also Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti as well as other Mādhyamika writers often make flat statements that such-and-such does not exist. As we have seen in the case of Buddhapālita, these statements have to be understood in the context of the whole Madhyamaka philosophy. Sometimes the author does, indeed, intend to deny that something exists even on the conventional level. More often, such statements are made in the context of an investigation into ultimate reality. Then what is meant is that the thing in question does not exist by intrinsic nature, that it lacks intrinsic nature. Hence, despite some appearances to the contrary, the Madhyamaka position is not a nihilistic assertion of the nonexistence of everything. Rather it is a middle way between existence by intrinsic nature, on the one hand, and pure nonexistence, on the other.[28]

VII. Liberation according to the Madhyamaka school

So far we have considered the question of whether the Madhyamaka school holds that nothing exists. The soteriological aspect of the question of nihilism is whether the Madhyamaka position undercuts the possibility of liberation, the goal of Buddhist spiritual life. Buddhapālita defines liberation as follows:

(69) By the cessation of saṃsāric existence (*bhava*), [re] birth ceases; that is called "liberation." That one who thus sees [things] as they really are, understands reality (*tattva*). By understanding reality, one will be liberated.

Moreover he says,

(70) For one who sees reality, there is nothing [further] to be done.

Thus Buddhapālita accepts the common Buddhist view that liberation is the cessation of rebirth in saṃsāra and that the cessation of rebirth is brought about by a direct experience of reality. The difficulty is that, from the Madhyamaka point of view, what reality can there be? In his commentary on MMK 15–6, Buddhapālita has an opponent make the point as follows:

(71) *Objection*: Here [you] have said that by seeing reality, one will be liberated. "Reality" (*de kho na, tattva*), moreover, is the nature of that (*de'i dngos po*, probably *tadbhāva* or *tadvastu*), thatness (*de kho na, tattva*); the meaning is that it is the intrinsic nature of an entity (*dngos po'i ngo bo nyid, bhāvasvabhāva*). As to that, if the intrinsic nature of an entity simply does not exist, in that case won't the vision of reality be impossible for you? If there is no vision of reality, how can liberation be possible? Therefore that view that entities are without intrinsic nature is not good.

Buddhapālita replies,

(72) Those who thus see intrinsic nature and the nature of another and nonexistence [or "a nonentity": *abhāva*] do not, even in that way, see the reality (*tattva*) in the supremely profound teaching of the Buddha. [The preceding sentence paraphrases MMK 15–6.] We see entities' lack of intrinsic nature as it really is, illuminated by the risen sun of dependent origination. Therefore, because just we have the vision of reality, only for us is liberation also possible.

His reply continues in his commentary on MMK 15–7. This has been quoted in part in quotations (28) and (40), but it seems worth repeating in full in the present context:

(73) Those who see entities as existent and nonexistent do not see reality, Therefore, for them, liberation is also not possible. For us, engaging in conventional activities (*tha snyad byed pa*) without attachment to existence and nonexistence, it is not the case that [liberation] is impossible. If to see entities and nonentities were to see reality, there would be no one who would not see reality; therefore that is not the vision of reality. Therefore entities' lack of intrinsic nature is reality; and only by seeing that will one be liberated.

Here Buddhapālita has made a very significant point. It is true that the Madhyamaka analysis fails to find an intrinsic nature in any entity. This does not mean, however, that the search for reality, and thus for liberation, ends in failure. Since the fact that things do not have intrinsic nature is the way things really are, that fact itself *is* reality. Rather than being a cause for despair, the thorough comprehension of things' lack of intrinsic nature is itself the fulfillment of the quest for reality and liberation. According to the Mādhyamikas, it is those who base their search for liberation on views of existence and nonexistence, entities and nonentities, whose quest will fail. Thus far from being an obstacle to liberation, the realization that there is no intrinsic nature in things alone makes it possible.

In the Indian context, any theory of liberation has to deal with the actions (*karman*) which bind one to saṃsāra and the passions – in Buddhist terminology, the afflictions (*kleśa*) – which produce them. Buddhapālita says,

(74) Here, since action and the afflications are the cause of [re] birth, it is said [in MMK 18–5a] that liberation is due to the ending of action and the afflictions.

What does seeing that things have no intrinsic nature have to do with putting an end to action and the afflictions? Buddhapālita explains,

(75) When the unwise, whose intellectual eye is obscured by the darkness of confusion, conceptually construct intrinsic nature in entities, desire and hatred are produced in them. When the light of the knowledge of dependent origination has dispelled the darkness of confusion and one sees with the eye of discernment (*prajñā*) entities' lack of intrinsic nature, then that [person's] desire and hatred do not arise in regard to [something] without a basis.

According to the Mādhyamikas, insight into the absence of intrinsic nature in things causes one no longer to have desire and hatred for them. The afflictions cease, and therefore actions motivated by them cease, and therefore rebirth ceases, and this is liberation.

Buddhapālita sums up his position on the question of liberation in a passage quoted in part earlier:

(76) Therefore emptiness is reality, and only by the meditative cultivation (*bhāvanā*) of emptiness will one comprehend reality. The comprehension of reality is called "liberation."

Thus the Madhyamaka critique of claims that entities have intrinsic nature is not "philosophy for its own sake" but is conceived of as a means to liberation. Therefore, as Buddhapālita said in quotation (3), it is taught to others in order to liberate them; and the motivation for doing so is compassion.

Finally, it should be pointed out that there is a sense in which the Madhyamaka critique *does* undercut the project of gaining liberation. If liberation or nirvāṇa is conceived of as an entity to be acquired by another entity called the "self," then, according to the Mādhyamikas, such a liberation is quite impossible. For one thing, the insight into reality which is essential for liberation shows that the self does not exist as a real entity. Buddhapālita says,

(77) In brief, seeing that a self (*ātman*) and what belongs to a self (*ātmīya*) do not exist externally or internally is the highest reality (*de kho na'i dam pa*). By the meditative cultivation of the view of reality, one will comprehend reality.

And

(78) Thus not to see a self and what belongs to a self externally or internally is the vision of reality. That [yogi] meditatively cultivates that and makes it firm.

To seek liberation in a way which perpetuates one's clinging to notions of "I" and "mine" is self-defeating. For liberation to occur, one must thoroughly understand that self and other are only conventional designations. Buddhapālita discusses this problem in his commentary on MMK 16–9:

(79) Here the complete cessation of appropriation is called "nirvāṇa;" but the root of all appropriation is the grasping of self and what belongs to a self. Therefore those who vainly imagine, "I will enter final nirvāṇa (*parinirvāṇa*) with no appropriation! May final nirvāṇa be mine!" continue to embrace a grasping of a self and what belongs to a self. Therefore, that very grasping of theirs, of a self and what belongs to a self, is an appropriation which is not well grasped. How would liberation be possible for one who has an appropriation? Who is that one who would enter final nirvāṇa with no appropriation? And of whom would there be final nirvāṇa? All these are produced by the craving and ignorance of the one [who grasps in that way].

Notes

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1 See Ruegg (1981), p. 60, and Ruegg (1982), p. 512.
2 Tāranātha, pp. 105–6.
3 *Bstan 'gyur Dbu ma Tsa*, Peking (Vol. 95 of Japanese reprint) 317a–8; Derge (Vol. 1 of Japanese reprint) 281a–3.
4 See Tachikawa (1974).
5 See Lindtner (1981).
6 Not available to me at the time of writing this paper.
7 See Saito (1984), which contains a complete edition of the text and a translation of the first sixteen chapters.
8 See, for example, Ruegg (1981), pp. 64–65, 76–78.
9 Ruegg (1981), p. 58.
10 *Gambhīro cāyam Ānanda paṭiccasamuppādo gambhīrāvabhāso ca* D II 55,12,13.
11 *Vuttaṃ kho pana etaṃ Bhagavatā. Yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati, yo dhammaṃ passati so paṭiccasammuppādaṃ passati* M I 190.37–191.2.
12 *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe| sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā||* La Vallée Poussin (1913) [abbrev.: LVP], 503.10,11.
13 *anirodham anutpādam ... pratītyasamutpādam ...* (LVP 11.13,15). If one understands *anirodha* and *anutpāda* as *karmadhāraya* compounds in apposition with *pratītyasamutpāda*, one translates "... dependent origination, which is noncessation,

nonorigination . . .". On the other hand, if one follows the Tibetan translation (LVP 11 n. 6) and takes them as *bahuvrīhi* compounds, then one translates ". . . dependent origination, which is without cessation, without origination . . .".

14 See, e.g., Robinson (1967), pp. 177–8 and Lamotte (1962), pp. LXIV–LXV, 287–291.

15 In passages quoted from Buddhapālita, Sanskrit words in parentheses are reconstructed from the corresponding Tibetan terms. Where the Sanskrit original is uncertain, Tibetan may be given instead of or in addition to Sanskrit.

16 I have not been able to identify the source of this quotation.

17 *na saṃbhavaḥ svabhāvasya yuktaḥ pratyayahetubhiḥ| hetupratyayasaṃbhūtaḥ svabhāvaḥ kṛtako bhavet|| svabhāvaḥ kṛtako nāma bhaviṣyati punaḥ katham| akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca||* (LVP 259.9,13; 260.3; 262.11).

18 *pratītya yad yad bhavati tat tac chāntaṃ svabhāvataḥ* (LVP 159.17).

19 The afflictions are undesirable emotional states. The three most often mentioned are desire (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*), and confusion (*moha*). See quotation (9).

20 The five *skandhas* are material form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception/conception (*saṃjñā*), mental formations (*saṃskārāḥ*), and cognition (*vijñāna*).

21 The view of permanence is the view that there is a self which persists after death; the view of annihilation is the view that there is a self which is annihilated at death. The Buddha taught dependent origination as a middle way between these two extremes. By extension, the view of permanence connotes the view that there are enduring entities. The view of annihilation connotes the view that there are entities which are annihilated, resulting in a nonentity, the absence of an entity.

22 The twelve *āyatanas*, "sense-fields," are the six sense faculties (the five physical senses and the mind) with their corresponding objects (visible form, sound, etc., plus dharmas for the mind). The eighteen *dhātus*, "elements," are the twelve *āyatanas* plus the six corresponding cognitions, that is, visual cognition, auditory cognition, and so on up to mental cognition.

23 *prakṛter anyathābhāvo na hi jatūpapadyate* (LVP 271.7).

24 For a more detailed treatment of this problem in the context of Candrakīrti's thought, see Ames (1982). See also Section 4, pp. 91–94, in Huntington (1983).

25 See LVP 504.8–10.

26 The five ways in question are five possible relationships between two things: sameness; difference; the first possessing the second; the first existing in the second; and the second existing in the first. See MMK 10–4.

27 For a detailed discussion of these questions, see Ruegg (1977), especially pp. 15–19.

28 For a treatment of the question of Madhyamaka and nihilism in the works of Bhāvaviveka, see Eckel (1980).

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(1) . . . *slob dpon rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba rjes su ston par bzhed pas | rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba'i zab mo nyid yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du gzigs pas* . . . (P178b–4, 5; D158b–2).

(2) . . . *rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba zhes bya ba don dam pa'i bden pa mchog tu zab pa* . . . (P179a–1, D158b–5, 6).

(3) *slob dpon thugs rje'i bdag nyid can gyis* (P: *gyi*) *sems can rnams sdug bsngal sna tshogs kyis nyen par gzigs nas de dag rnam par grol bar bya ba'i phyir dngos po rnams kyi yang dag pa ji lta ba nyid rab tu bstan par bzhed pas rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba rjes su bstan pa brtsams te| yang dag ma yin mthong ba 'ching|| yand dag mthong ba mam par grol|| zhes gsungs pa'i phyir ro* (P omits *ro*)|| (P179a–6, 7, 8; D159a–3, 4).

(4) *de bzhin gshegs pa nyid kyis rten cin 'brel bar 'byung ba bshad cing rab*

tu bstan pa bden mod kyi| 'on kyang 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi dbang gis skye ba la sogs pa'i brjod pa dag gis bshad cing rab tu bstan pas| de la da (P: *de*) *ltar nyid kyang brjod pa tsam la mngon par zhen pa'i blo can kha cig rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba mchog tu zab pa ma rtogs pa na| dngos po rnams ni yod pa kho na yin te| gang gi phyir de dag gi skye ba dang 'gag pa dang 'gro ba dang 'ong ba dag brjod pa'i phyir ro|| . . . de dag la rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid rab tu bstan pa'i phyir slob dpon gyis rigs pa dang lung sngon du btang ba 'di brtşams so||* (P179b–8 to 180a–4, D159b–3 to 6).

(5) *de lta bas na sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi dbang gis kyang de dang de dag gsungs pas| de'i phyir de kho na mthong bar 'dod pa mams kyis 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi dbang gis gsungs pa dag la mngon par ma zhen par bya ste* (P: *byas te*)| *de kho na gang yin pa de gzung bar bya'o||* (P277a–5, 6; D245a–5, 6).

(6) *bcom ldan 'das kyis 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi dbang gis* (P omits *gis*) *dus gsum bstan pa mdzad kyi| de kho nar ni dus gsum mi 'thad do||* (P278b–6; 7;D246b–4, 5).

(7) . . . *ngo bo nyid dang bral ba ngo bo nyid kyis* (D omits *kyis*) *stong pa* . . . (P216a–7, D192a–1).

(8) *gang gi phyir las ni nyon mongs pa'i rgyu las byung ba yin la| nyon mongs pa mams ni phyin ci log gi rgyu las byung ba yin pa de'i phyir las dang nyon mongs* (P omits *dang nyon mongs*) *ngo bo nyid med do* (D omits *ngo bo nyid med do*) *zhes smra'o||* (P269a–8 to 269b–1, D238a–2,3).

(9) *las dang nyon mongs pa de dag kyang yang dag pa ma yin pa'i rnam par rtog pa las byung ba yin gyi ngo bo nyid kyis yod pa ni ma yin no|| nyon mongs pa ni tshul bzhin ma yin par rnam par rtog pa las byung ba yin te| ji ltar yul gcig kho na la yang la la ni chags par 'gyur| la la ni sdang bar 'gyur| la la ni rmongs par 'gyur bas| de'i phyir nyon mongs pa rnams ni rnam par rtog pa las byung* (P: *'byung*) *ngo|| nyon mongs pa can gyi sems dang ldan pa'i lus dang ngag dang yid kyis mngon par 'du byed pa dag ni las zhes bya ste . . . de lta bas na las dang nyon mongs pa dag ni yang dag pa ma yin pa'i rnam par rtog pa'i rgyu las byung ba yin no||* (P272b–8 to 273a–4, D241a–6 to 241b–2).

(10) *kho bo cag gis lus kyi rgyu las de dang nyon mongs pa de dag rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba'i phyir| ngo bo nyid stong ngo|| zhes bstan pas| 'bras bu ni rgyu'i yon tan gyi bdag nyid can du 'dod par bya ba yin pas de'i phyir gal te lus kyi rgyu las dang nyon mongs pa dag nyid stong zhing de dag stong na lus ngo bo nyid yod do|| zhes bya ba de ji ltar brjod de|* . . . (P269b–4, 5, 6; D238a–6, 7).

(11) *nye bar blang ba gang yod do snyam du sems pa de yang rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba'i phyir ngo bo nyid med do||* (P298b–4, 5; D264a–3, 4).

(12) *ci khyod rta la zhon bzhin nyid* (P omits *nyid*) *du rta ma mthong ngam| khyod dngos po rnams rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba zhes kyang smra la| de dag* (P, D: *dag gang*) *gi ngo bo nyid med pa nyid kyang ma mthong ko||* (P253b–2, 3; D224a–3).

(13) . . . *rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba smra ba rnams la las 'di zhes bya ba de rkyen las byung ngo zhes bya ba mi srid la| rgyu med pa las byung bar smra ba*

rnams la yang las 'di zhes bya ba de rgyu med pa las byung ngo|| zhes bya ba mi srid pa . . . (P270a–7, 8; D239a–1, 2).

(14) *de lta bas na dngos po dang dngos po med par mthong ba dag ni rtag pa dang chad par lta bar thal bar 'gyur ba'i phyir de dag la 'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa dang bcings pa dang thar pa dag mi 'thad kyi| rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba smra ba nyid la ni 'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa bcings pa dang thar pa zhes bya ba dag 'grub po||* (P261b–5, 6; D231a–5, 6).

(15) *rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba smra ba rnams la ni dngos po skye bzhin pa yang yod pa ma yin la | dngos po skye bzhin pa'i skye ba yang yod pa ma yin no||* (P216a–5, 6; D191b–7).

(16) . . . *dngos po dang dngos po med par rtog pa thams cad ni rtag dang chad pa'i skyon dang rjes su 'brel pa yin la| rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba ni dngos po dang dngos po med par lta ba dag las phyi rol du gyur pa yin pas| de'i phyir rtag pa dang chad par lta ba'i skyon las mam par grol ba yin no||* (P271a–3, 4; D239b–3, 4).

(17) See quotation (63).

(18) *de lta bas na slob dpon gyis dngos po rnams kyi ngo bo nyid med pa nyid rab tu bstan pa'i phyir 'di brtsams so* (D: *brtsam mo*)|| (P179b–6, 7; D159b–2).

(19) *dngos po rnams kyi yang dag pa ji lta ba* (D; *ba bzhin*) *nyid gang yin| bshad pa| ngo bo nyid med pa nyid de|* (P179a–8, D159a–4).

(20) *gang gi phyir las ngo bo nyid med pa de'i phyir skye ba med de| 'di ltar las kyi ngo bo nyid yod na ni las kyi skye ba 'di yin no|| zhes skye ba yang 'thad par 'gyur na| las kyi ngo bo nyid med na ci zhig skye bar 'gyur| ci ste skye na yang ngo bo nyid du ni skye bar mi 'gyur ro|| gang ngo bo nyid du skye bar mi 'gyur ba de ni las nyid ma yin te| las kyi ngo bo nyid med pa'i phyir ro||* (P267a–3, 4; D236a–1, 2).

(21) *de lta bas na de kho na'i don mam par ma shes nas chud mi za ba'i tshig tsam la dngos por mngon par zhen par* (D: *zhi bar*) *byas nas mang po dang sna tshogs pa dang snying po med pa de snyed cig smras so|| 'di ltar las ni ngo bo nyid med pa kho na yin te| gang gi phyir ngo bo nyid med pa de'i phyir ma skyes pa yin la| gang gi phyir ma skyes pa de'i phyir chud za bar mi 'gyur te|* (P267b–7 to 268a–1, D236b–4,5).

(22) . . . *dngos po thams cad ngo bo nyid* (P omits *ngo bo nyid*) *kyis stong pa'i phyir ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags par mthong ba* . . . (P275a–4, D243a–7).

(23) . . . *thog ma dang tha ma med par gsungs pas bcom ldan 'das kyis 'khor ba yang ngo bo nyid stong par bstan to|| 'di ltar gal te 'khor ba* (P, D: *ba pa*) *zhes bya ba dngos po 'ga 'zhig yod par gyur* (D; *gyur pa*) *na de la thog ma yang yod* (P: *yod pa*)| *tha ma yang yod par 'gyur bar the tshom med do||* . . . *de lta bas na thog ma dang tha ma med par gsungs pas 'khor ba zhes bya ba dngos po 'ga'yang mi 'thad do||* (P238b–6 to 239a–1, D211a–4, 5, 6).

(24) *de* (P: *da*) *ltar gang gi phyir dngos po skye ba rnam pa thams cad du mi 'thad pas* (P: *pa'ī*) *de'i phyir skye ba med pas skye bar brjod pa ni tha snyad tsam yin no||* (P182b–2, D161b–6, 7).

(25) ... *skye bar brjod pa ni tha snyad tsam du grub po*|| (P190a–1, D168b–2).

(26) *de'i phyir de lta bu'i rang bzhin shes pa rang rig pa gzhan las* (P: *la*) *shes pa ma yin pa gang yin pa de ni de kho na'i mtshan nyid yin par shes par bya'o*|| (P277b–3, 4; D245b–2, 3).

(27) *'di ltar 'gyur ba'i gnyen po ni rang bzhin yin pas de'i phyir rang bzhin ni mi 'gyur ba* (D omits *ba*) *rtag pa yin pa'i rigs na*| *dngos po rnams la ni gzhan du 'gyur ba snang bas de'i phyir de dag la ngo bo nyid kyis yod pa nyid mi 'thad do*|| (P255b–3, 4; D226a–1).

(28) See quotation (73).

(29) *de ltar gang gi phyir dngos po rnams la yod pa nyid dang med pa nyid du lta ba sky on du mar 'gyur ba de'i phyir dngos po rnams ngo bo nyid med pa zhes bya ba de ni de* (P omits *de*) *kho na mthong ba ste dbu ma 'i lam yin la de nyid don dam pa 'grub pa yin no*|| (P256a–7, 8; D226b–3).

(30) See quotation (76).

(31) *stong ngo zhes kyang brjod mi bya*| *mi stong ngo zhes kyang mi bya*| *stong pa dang mi stong pa dang*| *stong pa yang ma yin mi stong pa yang ma yin no zhes kyang brjod par mi bya'o*|| *yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun tu rtog pa spang ba'i phyir dang*| *don dam pa'i de kho na gdags pa'i don du ni de dag brjod par bya ste* ... (P299b–2, 3, 4; D264b–7 to 265a–1).

(32) ...*stong pa nyid ces bya ba'i* (D; *ba*) *dngos po 'ga'yang med do*|| (P248b–4, D219b–7).

(33) *gang dag stong pa nyid la dngos po nyid du mngon par zhen pa de dag la ni*| *gzhan gang gis kyang mngon par zhen pa de bzlog par mi nus te*| *dper na ci yang med do zhes smras pa na ci yang med pa de nyid byin cig ces zer ba gang yin pa de la med pa nyid 'dzin du gzhug par ji ltar nus pa bzhin te* ... *gang dag gis stong pa nyid kyang stong par mthong ba de kho na mthong ba de dag la ni stong pa nyid du grub po*|| (P249a–1, 2, 3; D220a–3, 4, 5).

(34) ... *dngos por snang ba ni sgyu ma dang*| *smig rgyu dang* | *dri za'i grong khyer dang*| *gzugs brnyan bzhin du grub po*|| (P242a–1, 2; D213b–6, 7).

(35) *mngon sum du dmigs pa zhes gang smras pa de yang rang gi sems kun tu rmongs pa'i skyon gyis sgyu ma dang rmi lam mthong ba bzhin du mthong ba yin gyi*| *'di la yang dag pa* (D; *par*) *cung zad kyang med de*| *'di bden no snyam du mngon par zhen pa de spang ba'i* (P: *spangs pa'i*) *phyir*| *bcom ldan 'das kyis* ... *gsungs te* | (P298b–8 to 299a–2, D264a–6, 7).

(36) *rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba ni bdag nyid 'di lta bu yin te*| *gang gi phyir re zhig gzhan la brten nas gzhan zhes bya ba de'i phyir 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi dbang gis* (P: *gi*) *gzhan yin no zhes smra'o*|| ... *gang gi phyir re lde la ltos* (P: *bltos*, here and in the next two instances) *te bum pa gzhan zhes bya ba ni re lde la ltos pa'i phyir dang*| *re lde la rag lus pa'i phyir dang*| *rang las rab tu ma grub pa'i phyir bum pa la gzhan nyid yod pa ma yin no*|| *gang gi* (P omits *gi*) *phyir re lde la mi ltos pa bum pa gzhan ma yin pa zhes bya ba 'ba' zhig la yang*| *gzhan ma yin pa dang mi mthum pa gzhan nyid med pa de'i phyir don dam pa'i dbang gis* (P: *gi*) *gzhan med do zhes smra'o*|| (P250b–6 to 251a–2, D221b–5 to 222a–1).

(37) *de lta bas na de dag thams cad kyang de kho nar rang las rab tu 'grub pa yod pa ma yin no|| 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi dbang gis ni brjod par bya'o||* (P280b–6, 7; D248–1,2).

(38) *. . . brjod pa thams cad kyang mi 'thad do|| 'jig rten gyi tha snyad gyi dbang gis ni de dag thams cad kyang 'thad de|* (P282a–5, D249b–4, 5).

(39) *. . . bcom ldan 'das kyis kyang dngos po rnams ngo nyid stong par gzigs kyang| 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi dbang gis 'di ni yang dag pa nyid do|| 'di ni yang dag pa nyid ma yin no|| 'di ni yang dag pa nyid dang| yang dag pa nyid ma yin no|| zhes gsungs so||* (P276b–7, 8; D244b–7 to 245a–1).

(40) See quotation (73).

(41) *'di ni de kho na bsam pa yin pas 'di la 'jig rten pa'i brjod pa . . . dag gis ci bya|* (P236a–1, D208b–5, 6).

(42) *. . . 'jig rten gyi kun rdzob kyi bden pa gang gis bum pa yod do sab ma yod do zhes brjod pa de nyid kyis bum pa chag go sab ma tshig go zhes de dag mi rtag par yang brjod do|| gang gi tshe de kho na bsam pa* (P, D; *sab ma tsam pa* for *bsam pa*) *de'i tshe ni bum pa dang sab ma dag brten nas gdags par bya ba yin pas mi 'thad na de dag chag pa dang tshig pa lta 'thad par ga la 'gyur| gzhan yang de bzhin gshegs pa yang 'jig rten gyi kun rdzob kyi dbang gis de bzhin gshegs pa bgres so|| de bzhin gshegs pa mya ngan las 'das so|| zhes mi rtag par yang brjod do|| gang gi tshe don dam par bsam pa de'i tshe ni de bzhin gshegs pa nyid mi 'thad na bgres pa dang mya ngan las 'das pa dag lta 'thad par ga la 'gyur te|* (P301b–5 to 8, D266b–6 to 267a–1).

(43) *gal te sangs rgyas phung po rnams la brten nas gdags par bya ba* (P: *ba ma*) *yin na| de'i don ni sangs rgyas ngo nyid las med pa ma yin nam| 'di ltar ngo bo nyid las yod pa la ni yang* (P omits *yang*) *brten nas gdags pas ci bya ste| de'i ngo bo nyid gang kho na yin pa de kho nas gdags par bya bar 'gyur ro|| gang gi phyir de ngo bo nyid med pa de'phyir nye bar len pas* (D: *pas gang*) *gdags par bya* (D: *bya ba*) *ste| de lta bas na de bzhin gshegs pa ngo bo nyid las yod pa ma yin no||* (P296b–3, 4, 5; D262a–6, 7).

(44) *gang gi phyir de bzhin gshegs pa phung po rnams la brten nas gdags par bya ba yin gyi rang las rab tu grub pa med pa de'i phyir ngo bo nyid med do|| 'gro ba 'di dag kyang de dang de dag la brten* (P: *rten*) *nas gdags par bya ba yin gyi 'di dag la rang las rab tu grub* (P: *'grub*) *pa cung zad kyang med pas de'i phyir 'gro ba yang de bzhin gshegs pa bzhin du ngo bo nyid med do||* (P301a–8 to 301b–2, D266b–2, 3, 4).

(45) *de lta* (P omits *lta*) *bas na kho bos* (P: *bo*) *dngos po brten nas gdags pa yin no|| zhes shin tu nges par byas pa de gzung bar bya'o|| de lta na byed pa po dang las dang 'bras bu dang za ba po dang nyon mongs pa dang lus bstan pa dag kyang 'thad la| rtag pa dang chad pa'i skyon du yang thal bar mi 'gyur zhing 'khor ba yang 'grub po||* (P271a–4, 5, 6; D239b–4, 5).

(46) *byed pa po ni las la brten cing las la gnas| las la ltos* (P: *bltos* here and in the next instance) *nas byed pa po zhes gdags shing brjod do|| de'i las kyang byed pa po de nyid la brten nas 'byung* (P: *byung*) *zhing de'i las zhes gdags shing brjod do|| de'i phyir de gnyis ni ltos pa can du gdags pa yin gyi | ngo bo*

nyid du grub pa dang ma grub pa med do|| de'i phyir de ltar de gnyis yod pa dang med pa nyid du khas ma blangs pas dbu ma'i lam du gdags pa yin no|| gdags (P: *dgags*) *pa de ma gtogs par de gnyis 'grub pa'i mtshan nyid gzhan ma mthong ngo||* (P227a–8 to 227b–2, D201a–7 to 201b–2).

(47) . . . *ji ltar byed pa po las* (D omits *las*) *la brten nas gdags pa de bzhin du| nye bar len pa po yang nye bar blang ba la brten nas gdags so || ji ltar las byed pa po de nyid la brten nas gdags pa de bzhin du nye bar blang ba yang nye bar len pa po de nyid la brten nas gdags te| de gnis la yang de ma gtogs par 'grub pa'i mtshan nyid ma mthong ngo||* (P227b–3, 4, 5; D201b–2, 3, 4).

(48) *gal te snga ma dang phyi ma la sogs pa de dag dus kyi rtags yin na| de lta na dus ni dngos po kho na la brten nas gdags pa yin gyi rang las rab tu grub pa ma yin no||* (P281b–1, D249a–2, 3).

(49) *de lta bas na dus zhes bya ba dngos po 'ga' yang med par shes par bya ste| brten nas gdags* (D: *brtags*) *par ni 'grub po||* (P282a–5, 6; D249b–5).

(50) *de bzhin gshegs pa gang nye bar len pa gang* (P: *gang dag*) *gis gdags par bya ba de* (D omits *de*) *de nyid la rnam pa* (P omits *pa*) *lngas btsal na de nyid dang gzhan nyid du brjod par bya ba ma yin pa nye bar len pa la med na ji ltar de bzhin gshegs pa yod do zhes brjod par bya| de lta bas na brten nas gdags pa dang yod pa nyid kyang mi 'thad do||* (P298b–1, 2; D264a–1, 2).

(51) *gang dag la gcig pa nyid dang gzhan nyid du grub pa yod pa ma yin pa de dag la grub pa med de| de dag las gzhan du 'grub pa* (D: *la*) *mi 'thad pa'i phyir ro||* (P287b–5, 6; D254b–2, 3).

(52) *kho bo cag la ni dngos po* (D: *po la*) *brten nas gdags pa ngo bo nyid stong pas sgyu ma dang smig rgyu dang gzugs brnyan lta bu rnams la dngos po de gang gir 'gyur te* (P omits *te*) *dngos po de gang las gzhan du 'gyur te de nyid dang gzhan nyid du gyur ba med do||* (P294a–5, 6; D260a–5, 6).

(53) *smras pa|* . . . *nye bar len pa po dang nye bar blang ba ni de nyid dang gzhan nyid du mi brjod do|| re zhig de nyid du mi brjod de byed pa po'i tshig tha dad pa'i phyir ro|| gzhan nyid du yang mi brjod de* (D: *dam*) *so sor 'grub pa med pa'i phyir ro|| de lta bas na de gnyi ga yang yod de de nyid dang gzhan nyid du ni brjod par mi nus so|| bshad pa | ci khyod mdza' bshes kyi blos dgra bo dpang du len nam* (D: *tam*)*| khyod gang kho nas nye bar len pa po dang nye bar blang ba* (D: *blangs pa*) *dag rab tu 'grub par mi 'thad pa de kho nas de dag rab tu bsgrub pa'i phyir rtsom par byed ko || 'di ltar gal te nye bar blang ba dang nye bar len pa po zhig yod par gyur na gcig pa nyid dam| gzhan nyid du 'gyur bar the tshom med do|| gang dag gcig pa nyid du yang yod pa ma yin la gzhan nyid du yang yod pa ma yin pa de dag gzhan du ji ltar yod par 'gyur| de lta bas na nye bar blang ba yang yod pa ma yin pa nyid la nye bar len pa po yang yod ma yin pa nyid do|| tha snyad kyi dbang gis* (P: *gi*) *nye bar len pa po dang nye bar blang ba* (D: *blangs pa*) *dag rjod* (P: *brjod*) *par byed na yang de nyid kyang ma yin pa gzhan nyid kyang ma yin* (P omits *pa gzhan nyid kyang ma yin*) *par brjod dgos te* . . . (P298a–2 to 6, D263b–2 to 6).

(54) *smras pa| gang 'jig rten 'di med do|| 'jig rten pha rol med do|| sems can*

rdzus (P: *brdzus*) *te skye ba med do|| zhes bya ba la sogs par lta ba de dang| gang dngos po thams cad ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags pa zhes bya bar lta ba de gnyis la khyad par ci yod|* (P274b–7, 8; D243a–3, 4).

(55) *kho bo ni dngos po rnams ri bong gi rwa bzhin du med pa nyid du mthong la tshig gi skyon rnams* (P omits *rnams*) *yongs su spang ba'i* (P: *spangs pa'i*) *phyir yod pa nyid kyang ma yin la med pa nyid kyang ma yin no zhes mi smra'i| 'di ltar de dag rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba'i phyir ji ltar yod pa nyid dang| med pa nyid dag gzugs brnyan dag bzhin du mthong ba de ltar smra bas|* (P275b–7 to 276a–1, D244a–2, 3).

(56) *smras pa| gal te dus kyang med rgyu dang 'bras bu dang tshogs pa yang med na gzhan ci zhig yod de| de lta bas na de ni med par smra ba nyid yin no|| bshad pa| ma yin te ji ltar khyod dus la sogs pa dag ngo bo nyid las yod par yongs su rtog par byed pa de ltar mi 'thad par zad kyi| de dag brten nas gdags par ni 'grub po||* (P289a–1, 2; D255b–3, 4).

(57) *de lta bas na brten nas gdags par bya ba 'i don ni dngos po gang brten nas gdags par bya de ni rnam pa thams cad du ngo bo nyid stong pa'i phyir yod pa dang med par brjod par bya ba ma yin pa de nyid yin te| tha snyad kyi tshig la sky on med do||* (P299a–7, 8; D264b–4, 5).

(58) *de bzhin gshegs pa brten nas gdags par bya ba gang yin pa de| yod do zhe'am| med do zhes ji ltar brjod par rigs| 'di ltar gal te de bzhin gshegs pa zhig yod par gyur na| nye bar len pa med par* (D: *pa*) *yang yod pa kho nar 'gyur ba'i rigs na| nye bar len pa med par ni yod pa ma yin no|| gang nye bar len pa med par* (D: *pa*) *ni* (P omits *ni*) *yod pa ma yin pa de ji ltar yod do zhes brjod par bya| de bzhin gshegs pa gang* (D: *gang la*) *brten nas gdags par bya ba de ji ltar med do zhes kyang brjod par bya ste| di ltar u-dumba-ra'i* (D: *u-dum-bā-ra'i*) *me tog med pa ni gdags su med do||* (P299b–7 to 300a–1, D265a–3, 4, 5).

(59) *kho bo ni byed pa po dang las dag med pa nyid du mi smra'i| kho bos de dag gi bya ba yin par gyur pa dang | ma yin par gyur pa yons su rtog* (D: *rtogs*) *pa spangs pa de* (P: *des*) *byas te | kho bo ni byed pa po dang las dag brten nas gdags par 'dod de| ... de gnyis yod pa nyid dang med pa nyid du khas ma blangs pas ...* (P227a–6 to 227b–1, D201a–6 to 201b–1).

(60) *gang zhig po lta ba la sogs pa dag gi snga rol dang lta ba la sogs pa dag dang | da ltar lhan cig dang| lta la sogs pa dag gi phyi dus rnam pa thams cad du btsal na| de 'di'o zhes rang gis rab tu grub pa med pa de la lta ba la sogs pa dag gis yod do med do* (P omits *med do*) *zhes gdags pa'i rtog pa dag ldog par 'gyur te| re zhig rang nyid rab tu ma grub pa'i phyir de* (P omits *de*) *yod do zhes ji* (P: *ji ji*) *skad brjod par nus| lta ba la sogs pa dag gis* (P: *gi*) *gsal bar byed pa'i phyir de med do zhes kyang ji skad brjod par nus te | de'i phyir de la yod do med do zhes rtog pa dag mi 'thad* (P: *mthad*) *do || de lta bas na byed pa po dang las dag bzhin du nye bar len pa de yang gdags par zad kyi de ma gtogs par 'grub pa gzhan mi 'thad do||* (P231b–2 to 5, D205a–2, 3, 4).

(61) ... *rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba 'dis rgyu dang rkyen gyi* (P: *gyis*) *dbang gis* (P: *gi*) *dngos por gdags* (D: *brtags*) *pa yin gyi| dngos po rnams ngo bo nyid kyis yod pa ma yin no ...* (P248b–8, D220a–2).

(62) *sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyi bstan pa ni dngos po rgyu dang rkyen las gdags par zad kyi yod pa dang med pa ni ma yin no||* (P: *te |*) (P227a–3, 4; D245a–4).

(63) *kho bos phung po dang khams dang skye mched dag med pa nyid du mi smra'i| de dag yod pa nyid du smra ba sel bar byed do|| de gni ga yang skyon du che ste| . . . de'i phyir kho bo ni rten cing 'brel par 'byung bas yod pa nyid dang med pa nyid kyi sky on dang bral ba chad pa ma yin* (P: *yin pa*) *rtag pa ma yin pa rjes su rab tu ston gyi* (D: *pa*) *med pa nyid du mi smra'o||* (P205b–3 to 6, D182a–7 to 182b–2).

(64) *gang la rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba de la yod do zhe'am | med do zhes smra bar ga la rigs |* (P270b–6, D239a–6, 7).

(65) *dngos po ngo bo nyid stong pa sgyu ma dang | rmi lam dang | rmi lam dang| smig rgyu dang| gzugs brnyan dang | brag cha* (P: *ca*) *lta bu dag la ji ltar yang dag pa nyid dang| yang dag pa nyid ma yin par brjod de |* (D: *do||*) *de'i phyir de ni sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyi bstan pa yod pa dang med pa nyid kyi sky on dang bral ba | mu stegs byed thams cad dang thun mong ma yin pa don dam pa gsal bar byed pa yin no||* (P227a–1, 2; D245a–2, 3).

(66) *de lta bas na brdzun* (P: *rdzun*, here and in the next instance) *pa zhes gsungs pas dngos po rnams med par bstan pa ma yin no|| bcom ldan 'das . . . slu* (P: *bslu*) *ba'i chos gang yin pa de ni brdzun pa 'o zhes bya ba de gsungs pas ni dngos po rnams kyi ngo bo nyid stong pa nyid mu stegs byed thams cad kyis mi rtogs pa yod pa nyid dang med pa nyid kyi skyon dang bral ba yongs su* (P omits *su*) *bstan pa yin no||* (P246b–5, 6, 7; D218a–2, 3, 4).

(67) *'bras bu ngo bo nyid kyis stong pa bdag nyid kyis rab tu ma grub pa gang yin pa de* (D: *des*) *ji ltar skye bar 'gyur zhing| ji ltar 'gag par 'gyur | ci ste 'bras bu de* (P omits *de*) *ngo bo nyid med kyang skye ba dang 'gag par rnam par rtog na de la smra bar bya dgos te | ci de* (D: *ste*) *'bras bu'i ngo bo ma gtogs pa gzhan zhig skye ba dang 'gag par 'gyur ram | ci ste 'bras bu'i dngos po ma gtogs pa gzhan zhig skye bar 'gyur na ni des 'bras bu la cir 'gyur te | 'di ltar 'bras bu ma* (D: *'bras bur*) *yin pa skye ba 'bras bur mi 'gyur | de lta bas na 'bras bu de stong par yongs su rtog* (D: *rtogs*) *na yang med pa'i phyir ma 'gags pa dang ma skyes par yang thal bar 'gyur bas | de yang mi 'dod do || de lta bas na 'bras bu stong pa yang skye bar mi 'gyur zhing 'gag par yang mi 'gyur ro ||* (P287a–4 to 7, D254a–2 to 5).

(68) *re zhig dngos po ngo bo nyid stong pa la 'byung ba dang 'jig pa dag yod par mi 'thad de | ci'i phyir zhe na | yod pa ma yin pa'i phyir ro || 'di ltar ngo bo nyid yod pa ma yin pa la de dag gang gis yod par 'gyur | ngo bo nyid yod pa ma yin pa'i phyir gang gi 'di'o zhes tha snyad* (P omits *tha snyad*) *gdags pa nyid kyang yod pa ma yin pa de la ci zhig 'byung ngo zhe'am | ci zhig 'jig go zhes ji skad du brjod par bya | de lta bas na stong pa la 'byung ba dang 'jig pa dag 'thad pa nyid ma yin no ||* (P291a–4, 5, 6; D257b–3, 4).

(69) *srid pa 'gags pas skye ba zad par 'gyur ba de ni thar pa zhes bya'o || de ltar yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du mthong ba des de kho na rtogs pa yin la | de kho na rtogs pas thar par 'gyur ro ||* (P272b–6, 7; D241a–5).

(70) *de kho na mthong ba la ni bya ba ci yang med do* || (P276a–4, D244a–a5).

(71) *smras pa* | *'di la de kho na mthong bas thar par 'gyur ro* || *zhes bya zhing* | *de kho na zhes bya ba yang de'i dngos po ni de kho na ste* (P: *te zhes bya ba yang de'i dngos po ni de kho na te* in place of *ste*) | *dngos po'i ngo bo nyid ces bya ba'i tha tshig go* || *de la gal te dngos po'i ngo bo nyid med pa nyid yin na de lta na khyod la de kho na mthong ba mi 'thad par mi 'gyur ram* | *de kho na mthong ba med na thar pa 'thad par* (P: *pa*) *ji ltar 'gyur* | *de lta bas na* (P omits *na*) *dngos po rnams ngo bo nyid med pa zhes bya bar lta ba de ni bzang po ma yin no* || (P254b–7 to 255a–1, D225a–5, 6, 7).

(72) *gang dag de ltar ngo bo nyid dang gzhan gyi dngos po dang dngos po med pa nyid lta ba de dog ni 'di ltar yang* (P omits *yang*) *sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa mchog tu zab pa la de kho na mthong ba ma yin no* || *kho bo cag ni rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba'i nyi ma shar bas snang bar gyur pa'i* (P: *'gyur ba'i*) *dngos po rnams kyi ngo bo nyid med pa nyid yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du mthong bas de'i phyir kho bo cag nyid la de kho na mthong ba yod pas kho bo cag kho na la thar pa yang 'thad* (P: *mthad*) *do* || (P255a–2, 3, 4; D225a–7 to 225b–2).

(73) *gang dag dngos po rnams la yod pa nyid dang med pa nyid du rjes su lta ba de dag gis de kho na mi mthong bas de dag nyid la yang thar pa mi 'thad do* || *kho bo cag yod pa nyid dang* (D omits *dang*) *med pa nyid la mngon par zhen pa med par tha snyad byed pa dag la ni mi 'thad pa med* (P omits *pa med*) *do* || *gal te dngos po dang dngos po med par mthong ba de kho na mthong ba yin na ni de kho na* (D: *na la*) *ma mthong ba 'ga'yang med par 'gyur bas de ni de* (P, D omit *de*) *kho na mthong ba* (D omits *mthong ba*) *ma yin no* || *de lta bas na dngos po rnams kyi ngo bo nyid med pa nyid ni de kho na yin la de mthong ba kho nas thar par 'gyur te* | (P255a–6, 7, 8; D225b–4, 5).

(74) *'di la las dang nyon mongs pa dag ni skye ba'i rgyu yin pa'i phyir las dang nyon mongs pa zad pas thar pa zhes bya'o* || (P272b–8, D241a–6).

(75) *mi mkhas pa gti mug gi mun pas blo gros kyi mig bsgribs pa ni dngos po rnams la ngo bo nyid du rnam par rtog pa* (D omits *pa*) *de dag la 'dod chags dang zhe sdang dag skyed* (P: *bskyed*) *par byed do* || *gang gi tshe rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba shes pa'i snang bas gti mug gi mun pa bsal cing* | *shes rab kyi mig gis dngos po rnams kyi ngo bo nyid med pa nyid mthong ba de'i tshe na gnas med pa la de'i 'dod chags dang zhe sdang dag mi skye'o* || (P179a–8 to 179b–2, D159a–4, 5, 6).

(76) *de lta bas na stong pa nyid ni de kho na yin la stong pa nyid bsgom* (D; *bsgoms*) *pa kho nas ni de kho na rtogs par 'gyur zhing* | *de kho na rtogs pa nyid ni thar pa zhes bya ste* | (P273a–7, 8; D241b–5).

(77) *mdor na phyi dang nang la bdag med pa bdag gi med pa nyid du lta ba gang yin pa de ni de kho na'i dam pa yin la* | *de kho na'i lta ba bsgom* (D: *bsgoms*) *pas ni de kho na rtogs par 'gyur ro*|| (P271a–8, D239b–7 to 240a–1).

(78) *de ltar phyi dang nang la bdag dang bdag gir mi lta ba de ni de kho na mthong ba yin te* | *de de sgom* (P: *bsgom*) *par byed cing brtan* (P: *bstan*) *par byed do* || (P272a–3, D240b–3).

(79) *'di la nye bar len pa gtan du nye bar zhi ba gang yin pa de mya ngan las 'das pa zhes bya na | nye bar len pa thams cad kyi rtsa ba ni bdag dang bdag gir 'dzin pa yin pas | gang dag nye bar len pa med par yongs su mya ngan las 'da' bar bya'o || nye bar len pa med pa'i yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa bdag gir gyur cig snyam du rlom sems su byed pa de dag ni bdag dang bdog gir 'dzin pa yongs su bzung ste nges par gnas pa yin pas | de'i phyir de dag gi bdag dang bdag gir 'dzin pa de nyid nye bar len pa legs par ma zin pa yin no || nye bar len pa dang bcas pa la thar pa 'thad par ga la 'gyur te | nye bar len pa med par yongs su mya ngan las 'da' bar 'gyur ba de gang yin zhing yongs su mya ngan las 'da' ba gang gi yin par 'gyur te | de dag thams cad ni de'i sred* (D: *srid*) *pa dang ma rig pas bskyed pa yin no||* (P261a–2 to 6, D230b–4 to 7).

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THE *PATTHĀNA* AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THERAVĀDIN ABHIDHAMMA

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Vijñānavādin antecedents

Vasubandhu and a number of other Vijñānavādin writers defend the key idealist doctrine of the *ālaya-vijñāna* or store-consciousness from the charge of innovation by appealing to pre-existent notions among the Mahāsāṅghikas and Mahīśāsakas and also to the idea of the *bhavāṅga-vijñāna*.[1] The first two of these are mentioned already by Asaṅga.

One of the principal functions of the concept of *ālaya-vijñāna* is to solve the two closely related problems of the continuity of personality and the mechanism of karma without postulating an unchanging soul or substratum of existence. It is not then surprising to find the *pudgala* doctrine of the powerful Sāṃmitīya school omitted from the list of predecessors. The equally numerous but historically more influential sect of the Sarvāstivāda had no need for a storehouse-consciousness; for it held that past and future dharmas exist and accepted a physical manifestation of karma. Not surprisingly Asaṅga and his successors looked especially for support to ideas derived from the traditions of that considerable body of schools which had not accepted either the *pudgala* or the so-called realist doctrine of *sarvam asti*.

Unfortunately the two sources cited by Asaṅga are among the early Buddhist sects whose particular doctrines are less well-known to us. It is therefore impossible to judge how far Asaṅga's claims for the antiquity of the idea of the *ālaya-vijñāna* are really justified. Vasubandhu's reference to the *bhavāṅga-vijñāna* is therefore of particular importance. He himself attributes it to the Sinhalese sect (Tāmraparṇīya-nikāya), but later Vijñānavādin writers refer to this as a doctrine of the Sthaviras or Vibhajyavādins. At least two of these names must in this context refer to the school known today as the Theravāda.

North Indian Buddhist sources do not often mention the Theravāda before the Pāla period. There are, it is true, a few indications of a measure of interaction.

Chinese sources inform us that the Sinhalese monastery at Bodhgayā which was visited by Hsüan-tsang was founded during the reign of Samudragupta (latter half of the fourth century). Sinhalese monks are mentioned in an inscription at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa dated to the third quarter of the third century A.D. Further south the situation was perhaps rather different. The Ceylon commentaries give the impression that the Theravāda was well established in the Coḷa country in the time of Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosa (fl. c.430 A.D.). Indeed these works show that the Buddhists of the Theravāda school were reasonably aware of their mainly Mahāsāṅghika co-religionists in South India, but knew little of the North Indian systems.

We need not suppose that there was no connection at all between North and South India. This is quite obviously not the case with Buddhist art. More probably ideas and practices percolated slowly in both directions by means of intermediaries. In the present connection, however, it is possible that we should look more specifically to the Mahīśāsaka school for a means of transmission. Asaṅga in fact mentions their doctrine of the *āsaṃsārika-skandha* as a precursor of *ālaya-vijñāna*. Hsüan-tsang informs us that Asaṅga was originally a member of this school himself. Its geographical spread appears to have been particularly wide. Fa-hsien obtained a copy of their Vinaya in Ceylon, while the author of the Jātaka Commentary states that he was invited to compose the work by a monk of the Mahiṃsāsaka-vaṃsa. If we are to believe the *Visuddhimaggagaṇṭhipada*,[2] Buddhaghosa cites a work of theirs entitled Peṭaka; this may or may not be the work known to us as *Peṭakopadesa*. If the two can be identified, this would tend to confirm Bareau's suggestion that the Mahiṃsāsaka were originally the mainland counterpart of the Theravāda.[3]

Origins of the term *bhavaṅga*

Whether there is any direct influence or not, only from Theravādin sources can we at present hope to investigate Asaṅga's claim. The Pali term *bhavaṅga* first appears in this sense in the *Paṭṭhāna* and then in the *Milinda-pañha*.[4] Keith comments:

> The *bhavaṅga*, or stream of being, is a conception barely known in the Abhidhamma, and there not explained, but it evidently has already here[5] the sense of a continuum which is not conscious, but from which consciousness emerges, and which may therefore be reckoned as subconscious.[6]

With some qualification this is the position of the commentaries. It cannot, however, be taken as evidence for an earlier period. The relevant section of the *Milinda-pañha* cannot be dated with certainty much prior to the fifth century.

A rather different approach is taken by Sarathchandra in his study of the theory of the *citta-vīthi*. He writes: 'The word *bhavaṅga*, borrowed from the

Sarvastivada Abhidharma, meant originally a link in the Causal Chain or *pratītyasamutpāda*'.[7] This usage of the term is in fact not unknown to Pali literature. The formula of dependent origination is quite widely known as the wheel of existence (*bhava*). So it is quite natural for its parts to be referred to as factors of existence. Such a usage is explicit in the *Netti-pakaraṇa*, which lists the various terms which make up dependent origination and concludes:

> *Imāni bhavaṅgāni yadā samaggāni nibbattāni bhavanti, so bhavo. Taṃ saṃsārassa padaṭṭhānaṃ.*[8]
> When these factors of existence are conjointly produced, this is existence. Existence is the proximate cause of saṃsāra.

Later in the same work it becomes clear that the term *bhavaṅga* is used in the sense of a factor which tends to produce existence. The term also occurs once in the *Peṭakopadesa*, apparently in the same sense.[9]

The dating of the *Netti-pakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa* is uncertain. Both were known to Buddhaghosa. The *Peṭakopadesa* seems to have influenced the *Vimuttimagga*, a pre-Buddhaghosa work, which only survives in Chinese translation. Ñāṇamoli has, however, shown that the *Netti-pakaraṇa* is in part based upon the *Peṭakopadesa*. He has also argued that the latter shows signs of being in origin an oral work.[10] My own reading of it has left me with the same impression. Since it shows traces of influence from some of the earlier works of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, it may be appropriate to think of the second century B.C. for the work in its present form. Of course it is quite likely that it incorporates earlier traditions. The *Netti-pakaraṇa* was dated by Hardy to 'about the beginning of our era or shortly later.'[11] An earlier date is not impossible.

On this basis it would seem that the use in these two works of the term *bhavaṅga* to designate the links of dependent origination is as old as its use in Sarvāstivādin and Mahāyānist literature. No doubt it is best looked upon as part of the common stock of Buddhist technical terminology of the period. In fact it seems quite plain that this is the original meaning of the term, from which the use to designate a type of consciousness is derived.

In the commentarial literature *bhavaṅga* is explained as meaning cause (*hetu*) of existence. This is perhaps simply to say that the twelve *aṅgas* of dependent origination are identical to the twelve *paccayas* (conditions) or twelve *nidānas* (origins) and are hence in fact causes. This would be reinforced by the widespread use of expressions such as *ten' aṅgena* effectively in the sense of 'for this reason'.

The source of the term *bhavaṅga* used to designate or qualify a particular type of consciousness is then apparent. In the formula of dependent origination the third *aṅga* is consciousness, but in this context it is often used specifically to refer to consciousness at the moment of conception. This would be a less active type of consciousness resulting from past actions. Just such is the *bhavaṅga-citta* of the commentaries. In fact the connection is not entirely forgotten. The

later tradition relates the consciousness at conception (*paṭisandhi*) and at death (*cuti*) to the *bhavaṅga* mind. To a large extent these are treated as special terms for the first and last in the series of moments of *bhavaṅga* consciousness.[12]

The theory of the citta-vīthi in the commentaries

Perhaps at this point it would be useful to turn to the description of the process of consciousness given in the commentarial tradition. From here it may be easier to approach the origin and development of the system at an earlier period in the development of the abhidhamma. The system is set out in the works of Buddhaghosa, in detail in the *Visuddhimagga* and *Aṭṭhasālinī*, more briefly in his Sutta commentaries; in the writings of Buddhadatta and in the Chinese translation of the *Vimuttimagga*. Pali commentators and subcommentators after the fifth century A.D. add only a very little. The present account will be largely based upon the account of Buddhaghosa.[13]

The commentarial description of the consciousness process is highly complex. This is partly due to the abhidhamma attempt to cover all possible cases. So it can be made much simpler by excluding matters which apply only to non-human beings, to defective human beings or to normal human beings who are either experiencing some kind of higher consciousness or have attained some degree of sanctity. In this way a restricted account of the process as it applies to the ordinary person can be given.

Only forty five types of consciousness are then relevant. They fall into two groups:

a) *caused* – the cause will either be delusion or one of the possible combinations among delusion, greed, hate, non-greed, non-hate or non-delusion. Twenty eight types of caused consciousness are listed, divided into eight skilful, eight resultant and twelve unskilful.

b) *causeless* – i.e. not caused by any of the above. These number seventeen. This is made up of five sense consciousnesses which result from skilful action, five which result from unskilful action, the two mind elements (*mano-dhātu*) resulting from skilful and unskilful action respectively, mind consciousness element (*manoviññāṇa-dhātu*) resulting from unskilful action, two mind consciousness elements resulting from skilful action but differentiated by the accompanying feeling, the mind element which is purely activity (*kiriyā*) and the mind consciousness element (accompanied by neutral feeling) which is purely activity.

The term *kiriyā* designates a type of mentality which does not take part in the kammic process – it is neither the result of some previous action nor does it itself give rise to any result in the future. As the term applies most frequently to the state of mind of the arahat, it should not be translated by words such as 'functional' or 'inoperative', which have inappropriate connotations. The *kiriyā* mind is not mechanical, effete or unfeelingly robotic. Rather it is intended to designate the spiritual sensitivity of a man of developed wisdom, who responds

to every situation with appropriate activity without partiality of any kind. Here of course it is occurring in a weak form accessible to all.

Each of the above types of consciousness represents an interlocking complex of phenomena, made up of the appropriate type of mind, a number of appropriate mentals (*cetasika*) and groups of material phenomena of various kinds. The *number* of mentals will vary from a minimum of seven in the simplest form of sense consciousness up to a maximum of thirty five in a developed skilful consciousness. They will also vary *qualitatively* according to the type of consciousness. So for example the feeling which accompanies a skilful mind is itself skilful and qualitatively different to the feeling accompanying an unskilful mind.] The precise details of all this do not concern us here. It suffices perhaps to point out that the commentarial account of all this is firmly based upon the description given in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*. A few additional details have been added, but there are no changes of substance.

Mind door process

In fact this work gives a fairly static account of mentality and matter as they occur in particular moments—analogous let us say to a single frame in a motion picture. The theory of the *citta-vīthi* attempts to show their occurrence over a series of such moments—more analogous to a particular event in the film. Two types of process are described: [Five door process and mind door process.] These may occur in succession to one another or the mind door process may occur independently. We will take the latter simpler case first. This describes the situation of the individual who is absorbed in thought or memory without any direct perception of his sensory environment.

In this mind door process we need only take account of four of the functions (*kicca*) of consciousness:

1. *Bhavaṅga* – this is always one of the eight kinds of consciousness which are resultant and caused. The same type of mentality will normally perform this function throughout the life of a given individual. Its precise nature will be determined either by previous actions recalled to mind at the end of the previous life or by the manner in which death was met. Nevertheless it must be one of the above eight which result from some kind of skilful action or normal human birth could not have occurred. We may interpret its continuance throughout life as the natural mode to which the mind continually reverts as indicating its role of 'carrying' the essential features of the individual—those tendencies which remain apparently unchanged in a particular individual throughout a given life.

2. *Adverting* – this will always be a single occurrence of the *kiriyā* mind consciousness element (uncaused and accompanied by neutral feeling).

3. *Javana* – this will either be one of the eight skilful or one of the twelve unskilful consciousnesses. The term *javana* 'running' appears to be used to indicate the active nature of the mentality which performs this function. We may compare the simile given to differentiate skilful from resultant consciousness:

> ... the resultant is free from striving and like such things as the reflection (*nimitta*) of the face on the surface of a mirror; the skilful does involve striving and is like the face itself.[14]

Javana mind then makes up all the more active components of the individual. We may interpret [its continual recurrence in different forms as indicating the everchanging manifestations of human personality—all those behaviour patterns formed by experience and habit in the course of life.]

4. *Tadārammaṇa* – this is also called *piṭṭhi-bhavaṅga* 'after-bhavaṅga' to indicate that a special kind of *bhavaṅga* mind can occur immediately after a series of *javana* moments.[15] The term [*tad-ārammaṇa* 'having the same object' is used to indicate that this kind of *bhavaṅga* retains the object of the *javana* mind.] It may perhaps be seen as fixing the conscious experience of the *javana* stage in the unconscious mind. *Bhavaṅga* however is only unconscious in the sense that the subsequent memory of it is unclear. We may perhaps rather see the *tad-ārammaṇa* as providing a substitute which can partially displace the original *bhavaṅga*—not of course completely. This would be especially appropriate in the case of persistent unskilful activity. The function of *tadārammaṇa* is performed by eleven types of resultant consciousness—eight caused and three causeless mind consciousness elements. It will only occur if the mental object is clear. Otherwise as soon as the *javana* mind ceases the mind enters *bhavaṅga*.

This then is the normal flow of the mind when attention is not paid to the senses. If there is no particular activity, it remains in a state of rest: *bhavaṅga*. This continues without interruption in deep dreamless sleep. If thought or memory occur, then the active *javana* stage has arisen. In vague musing or unclear remembering there may be continual alternation between these two modes; for the active mode has only a limited duration before the mind must lapse into its normal passive mode. Of course to refer to these as modes is not

Table 1 Mind door process

function	*bhavaṅga*	*adverting*	*javana*	*tad-ārammaṇa*
citta	caused	causeless mind consciousness element	skilful or unskilful	mind consciousness element
associated cetasikas	up to 33	11	up to 34 or up to 21	up to 33 (caused) up to 11 (causeless)
kammic status	result of action	neither action nor result of action (*kiriyā*)	action	result of action
duration	no definite limit	one moment	up to seven moments	one or two moments

strictly accurate. Abhidhamma envisages a continual flow of consciousness arising and ceasing in every moment 'as if it were the stream of a river'.[16] We may note however that direct transition is envisaged from active mode to passive, but not from passive to active. In the latter case *kiriyā* mind must occur for one moment in order to turn *bhavaṅga* towards the object.

But what is the object at the mind door? Traditionally it may be any kind of object—past, present or future, purely conceptual or even transcendent. In the normal case, however, it will be either a memory of the past or some kind of concept. The door of its arising will be 'one part of the organ of mind reckoned as *bhavaṅga* mind'.[17] To be more exact it is disturbed *bhavaṅga* (*bhavaṅga-calana*) in conjunction with adverting which constitutes the door of mind, often treated in Buddhist thought as a sixth sense. Of course abhidhamma avoids describing consciousness as divided into parts; it always prefers a description in terms of successive moments.

Undisturbed *bhavaṅga* is described as clear or translucent.[18] Evidently it is seen either as storing past experience or as having direct access to the past (or future). In the first case we might understand it as an unconscious storehouse. The mind as a whole is certainly envisaged as accumulating tendencies, but it is not clear how far this would include experiences. What is probably intended is a water metaphor. Just as an undisturbed pool or stream is clear and offers no obstruction to vision, so *bhavaṅga* mind is intrinsically clear and featureless. When the pool is disturbed it is no longer possible to see through it—the water which it contains is now visible. Similarly when *bhavaṅga* mind is disturbed, it is no longer translucent; some part of its content becomes visible. Possibly this would not be so much the mind's content as part of its potential capacity to know becoming realized.

Sense door process

It is more normal to explain the process involving sense perception first. The reason, no doubt, is the predominant part played by the senses in our ordinary life. Abhidhamma evidently conceives of them as conditioning a great part of our experience in a largely mechanical fashion. Technically this would be expressed by saying that five door *javana* is the foundation of mind door *javana*.[19] However sense door process involves a greater number of functions than mind door process and at first appears more complex in its operation. So it is appropriate to list these:

1. *Bhavaṅga* – this was described above, but without distinguishing disturbed *bhavaṅga* as a separate stage.

2. *Disturbed bhavaṅga* – this occurs for two moments only, due to the stimulus of a sense object. Strictly speaking the object enters the field of the mind sense. At exactly the same moment sensory contact takes place with a physical impact (*ghaṭṭana*) upon the subtle matter which is the physical basis for the operation of sense consciousness.[20]

3. *Adverting* – the function of adverting to one of the sense doors is always undertaken by the *kiriyā* mind element, which has in fact no other function apart from turning the mind towards a sense. As was the case for mind door adverting, its duration is for one moment only.

4. *Seeing* – we will take this as our example for the senses. At this stage we are concerned with 'seeing only' with a minimal interpretative element. So this function is performed either by a visual consciousness which is the result of skilful action or by one which is the result of unskilful action. Which of the two it will be is determined by the nature of the object.[21] If it is the result of skilful action the neutral feeling which accompanies it will be subtle and will shade towards pleasant feeling. If it is the result of unskilful action that feeling will be inferior and will shade towards unpleasant feeling.[22] The same will be the case for hearing, tasting or smelling, but not for touching. Tactile sensation is conceived of as stronger. So body consciousness which is the result of skilful action is accompanied by a distinctive form of pleasant feeling, while unpleasant feeling invariably accompanies unskilful resultant body consciousness.

5. *Receiving* (*sampaṭicchana*) – this function is always performed by one of the two resultant mind elements. In fact [mind element has only the role of enabling transit to and from a sense consciousness;] the 'twice five' sense consciousnesses are invariably preceded by one moment of *kiriyā* mind element and invariably followed by one moment of resultant mind element. The point seems to be that [the normal state of the mind is the flow of resultant consciousness. Sense consciousness is quite different to this. So an intermediary is required for the passage between the two. This is rendered very neatly by the simile of the thread. A ground spider extends thread in five directions making a web and settles down in the middle. When one of the threads is struck by an insect, it is disturbed and comes out from its resting place. It *follows along the thread*, drinks the juice of its prey, comes back and settles down in the very same place.[23]

6. *Examining* (*santīraṇa*) – this function is always carried out by one of the three resultant mind consciousness elements. In effect the mind has returned to a weak form of resultant consciousness which is able to examine the object. This can also be expressed by saying that the mental of recognition (*saññā*) is prominent at this stage of the process.

7. *Establishing* (*votthapana*) – is carried out by the *kiriyā* mind consciousness element. We may see it as enabling the arising of the active *javana* stage. The mind is now able to establish the nature of the object. It is often compared to smelling food prior to eating it. Establishing determines the nature of the mind's response to the object which has been identified.

8. *Javana* – was discussed above. It is compared to the act of actually eating the food.

9. *Tad-ārammaṇa* – was also discussed earlier. It resembles the act of savouring the taste of food after it has been eaten.

The most difficult part of the sense door process is probably to be found in

Table 2 Eye door process

function	*bhavaṅga*	*disturbed bhavaṅga*	*adverting*	*seeing*	*receiving*	*investigating*	*determining*	*javana*	*tad-ārammaṇa*
citta	caused	caused	mind element	eye consciousness	mind element element	causeless mind consciousness element	causeless mind consciousness element	skilful or unskilful	mind consciousness element
associated cetasikas	up to 33	up to 33	10	7	10	up to 11	11	up to 34 or up to 21	up to 33 (caused) up to 11 (causeless)
kammic status	result of action	result of action	neither act nor result of action	result of action	result of action	result of action	neither act nor result of action	action	result of action
duration	no definite limit	two moments	one moment	one moment	one moment	one moment	one moment	up to seven moments	one or two moments
feeling	pleasant or neutral	pleasant or neutral	neutral	neutral	neutral	pleasant or neutral	neutral	pleasant unpleasant or neutral	pleasant or neutral

stages four to seven, but it can perhaps be clarified by another of the traditional similes. Some village boys were sitting playing a game on the road with mud.[24] A square coin made contact with the hand of one of the boys. The boy asked what it was that had touched his hand. Another boy said that it was pale (*paṇḍara*). One boy took firm hold of it together with the mud. Another said that it was square and flat. Yet another declared that it was a silver crown (*kahāpaṇa*). They took it and gave it to their mother, who used it for some task (*kamma*). Taking hold of the coin is compared to the mind receiving an object. Identifying it as square and flat is like the stage of examining, while the stage of establishing resembles the decision that it is worth one crown. The actual utilization of the coin (by the mother) is similar to the mind performing the function of *javana*.

What are we to make of this? The implication is clear. Visual perception involves not only seeing itself, but also fixing of the object in the mind, recognition of its general features and identification of its nature. These things are obviously very closely linked. In abhidhamma such a close relationship tends to be expressed in process terms as a succession of moments. A very close connection will be a rapid and constant succession. This is exactly what we have here. [Each single distinct visual perception involves a separate adverting, a separate seeing, a separate receiving, a separate examining and a separate establishing. Each of these occurs for one moment only. The five always occur together and always in the same logically required order of succession.]

Some variations in the process

The same is not true for the five door process as a whole. Only for very great objects i.e. distinct percepts does the process complete all nine stages before lapsing back into *bhavaṅga*. If the sensory stimulus is weaker, then an incomplete process may occur. This is called a fruitless case (*mogha-vāra*). Three possibilities are allowed:

a) Innumerable objects occur at the sense doors without being strong enough to bring about adverting to one of the five doors. In this case only disturbed *bhavaṅga* will occur. Presumably the intention is to indicate that many of our sensory stimuli are not consciously registered.

b) The stimulus may be adequate to bring about adverting and the succeeding stages down to establishing. We are told that this is the kind of case in which one says: 'it is as if seen by me'.[25] What is meant here is probably the type of occasion in which one might say: 'I thought I saw someone among the trees.' Something has been identified but is not yet clearly seen.

c) A stronger stimulus may be sufficient to bring about all the stages down to *javana*, but not enough to produce the last stage. This is illustrated by a simile. The damming of a river is compared to adverting which diverts the mind from the flow of *bhavaṅga*. The series of process consciousnesses is compared to the diverted water running in a great irrigation channel. *Javana* is like the water flooding the fields on both sides of the channel. Lapsing back into *bhavaṅga*

without the occurrence of *tadārammaṇa* resembles water running away through fissures back down to the river. We are told that there is no way to count the number of consciousnesses which do this.

Only one variation is permitted for the mind door process. If the object is clear the *tad-ārammaṇa* stage will arise. If it is not clear the mind will go back down to *bhavaṅga* immediately after the *javana* stage. The reason for this difference between sense door and mind door process is apparent. [Sense door process is aroused by the stimulus of a sense object and exists only in dependence upon such an object. It must then lapse if the object ceases to exist. The same is not the case for mind door process, whose object need not be of the present. The different forms of sense door process are due to variation in the *duration* of particular stimuli even if we experience this as varying vividness of perception. The two kinds of mind door process differ because of variation in the *clarity* of the object, the impulse as it were coming from within.] In practice however the process which terminates with the *javana* stage must be experienced as a lack of perceptual clarity in either case.

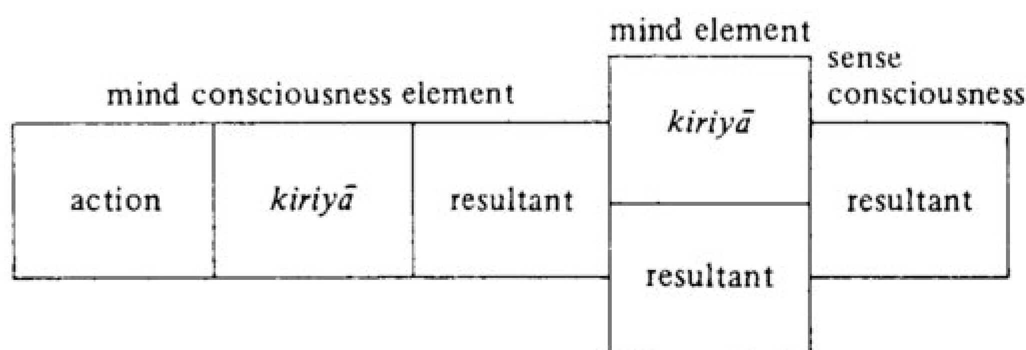
Obviously this is a rather simplified account of the abhidhamma theory of mental process. By excluding higher states of being from consideration much of the intended significance is lost. In fact a hierarchy of different states is involved. This is partly described in numerical terms—weaker states have fewer accompanying mentals than stronger states; skilful states tend to involve more mentals than unskilful ones. Still more important are qualitative differences, often only indicated by a single terminological change. For example supramundane consciousness may not necessarily have more accompanying mentals than a given *lokiya* skilful consciousness. Nevertheless it is qualitatively superior. Moreover each of its accompanying mentals is qualitatively superior to the same mental associated with the corresponding *lokiya* consciousness.

Sequential structure of the process

The simplified account does however have the advantage that it makes much clearer some significant features of the process. This is best shown by setting out the distribution of the forty five consciousnesses in grid form. In each section is given the number of possible types of consciousness together with the maximum number of accompanying mentals (in brackets).

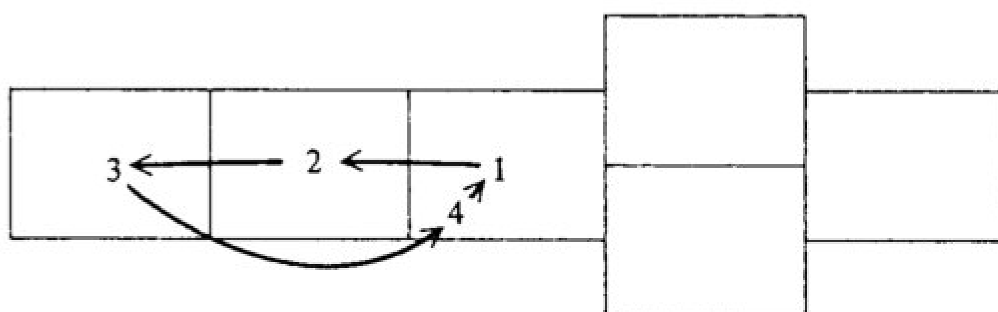
	Mind consciousness element	*Mind element*	*Eye consciousness element*
Skilful or Unskilful	twenty (34)	none	none
Kiriyā	one (11)	one (10)	none
Resultant	eleven (33)	two (10)	ten (7)

If we now rearrange this material slightly we can use it to form a picture of the way in which the process of mind works:

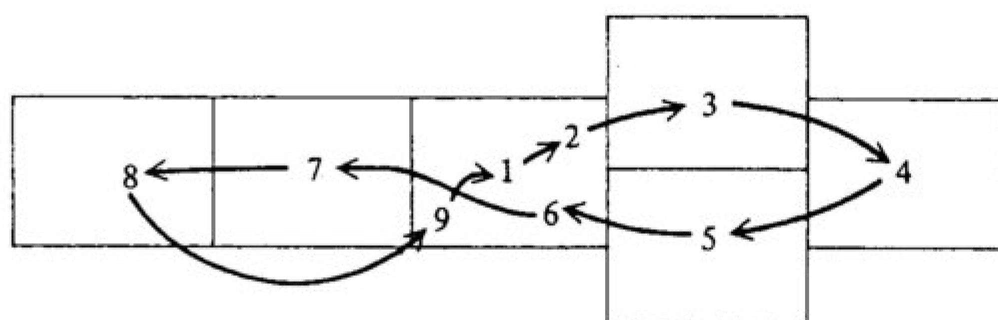


If we now set out the different possible sequences using the same numeration as before, we get:

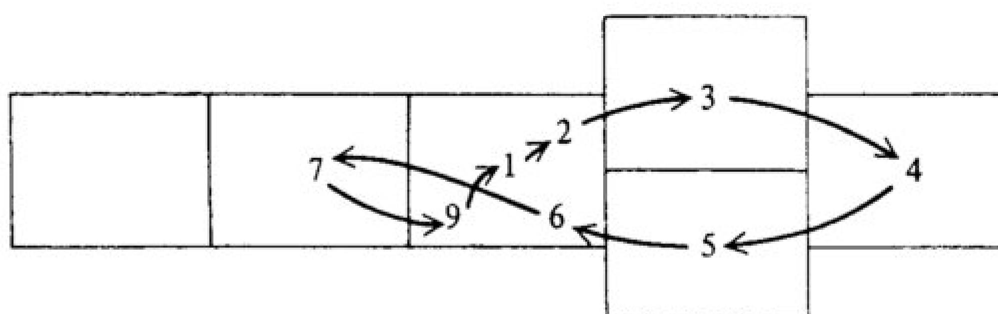
A) *Mind door process*



B) *Sense door process*



C) *Incomplete sense door process*



Two points of particular importance emerge. Firstly any change from the normal passive state of mind (i.e. resultant mind consciousness element) is brought about by *kiriyā* mind. This alone can bring about the arising of skilful or unskilful *javana* mind and only this can turn the mind to a sensory mode.

Secondly mind element always intervenes before and after a sense consciousness. The consequence of these and some other restrictions is to sharply limit the number of permissible successions between moments. This can be set out in tabular form:

permissible succession

from	unskilful	to	unskilful
”	unskilful	”	resultant
”	skilful	”	skilful
”	skilful	”	resultant
”	resultant	”	resultant
”	resultant	”	*kiriyā*
”	*kiriyā*	”	any
from	mind consciousness element	”	mind consciousness element
”	mind consciousness element	”	mind element
”	mind element	”	eye consciousness element
”	mind element	”	mind consciousness element
”	eye consciousness element	”	mind element

impermissible succession

from	unskilful	to	skilful
”	unskilful	”	*kiriyā*
”	skilful	”	unskilful
”	skilful	”	*kiriyā*
”	resultant	”	skilful
”	resultant	”	unskilful
from	mind consciousness element	”	eye consciousness element
”	mind element	”	mind element
”	eye consciousness element	”	eye consciousness element
”	eye consciousness element	”	mind consciousness element

The consciousness process before Buddhaghosa

All of this amounts to a fairly complex and sophisticated theory of mental processes. Naturally the question arises as to its origin. Sarathchandra writes:

> The theory is quite unique in the history of Indian thought, and it was probably the work of Buddhaghosa who came to Ceylon after having immersed himself in Sanskrit philosophy.[26]

This seems a very unsatisfactory statement of the position. The clearest evidence that the theory was well-established in the older Sinhalese commentaries prior to Buddhaghosa and Buddhadatta is perhaps to be found in the *Aṭṭhasāslinī*, the commentary to the first book of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*. Here we find a long passage reproduced under the title of *Vipākuddhāra-kathā*.[27]

Careful reading of this piece, which takes up just over twenty pages in the PTS edition, shows that it is reproduced directly from an old source, almost certainly a Sinhalese *aṭṭhakathā*. It commences with what it calls a *mātikā*, which

in this kind of context is in effect a table of contents. This gives three different enumerations of the various types of resultant mentality. These are attributed to three named Elders. It then immediately states: 'In this place they took what is called the *Sāketa Question*'. This records the traditional response to the question as to whether one *kamma* could have more than one resultant *citta* or vice versa.

Immediately after this we read: 'Again in this place what is called the *Explanation of Prominence* was taken. 'This is referred to by name in the *Visuddhimagga*, where it is regarded as the authoritative decision following the thought of the Commentarial teachers (... *Aṭṭhakathācariyānaṃ matānusārena vinicchayo*).[28] After the *Explanation of Prominence* follows the *Explanation of Roots*. As the passage continues it becomes quite evident that the *Aṭṭhasālinī* has simply taken a section almost verbatim or perhaps slightly condensed from a rather formalized earlier source. Careful analysis would, I think, show some distinctive stylistic features. An earlier passage in the same commentary—the *Dvārakathā*, shows some of the same characteristics and is specifically attributed to the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*.[29]

Since these passages are in any case authoritative and revered, we may suppose that their source is likely to be of considerably earlier date. The work of Adikaram would tend to suggest that little was added to the Sinhalese commentaries after the second century A.D.[30] Even if Adikaram's conclusion's are not accepted it makes little difference in this case. Not only does the *Vipākuddhārakathā* contain a very detailed account of the *citta-vīthi*. Even the differences between the views of the three Elders imply an elaborate theory of the consciousness process forming the basis of their discussion.

The Elders concerned are not unknown to us from other commentarial sources. So it is probably safe to assume that they are historical figures who actually did hold the views attributed to them. In that case we should expect to find the fully elaborated theory of the *citta-vīthi* already developed in the early first century A.D. This appears to be the view of A.K. Warder.[31]

The consciousness process and the Paṭṭhāna

Should we then take it that the theory originated with these Elders and their immediate predecessors? Or does it have a basis in the canonical abhidhamma literature? Ñāṇamoli writes: 'An already-formed nucleus of the cognitive series, based on such *Sutta-piṭaka* material, appears in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*.'[32] In support of this statement he cites passages from the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Paṭṭhāna*, but he does not appear to have attempted a serious analysis of the contents of the last-named—the final work of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* in the traditional order.

If this is undertaken, the result is rather unexpected. So far from being a later elaboration on the basis of the canonical abhidhamma material, the theory of the *citta-vīthi* appears as only a slight restatement of the *Paṭṭhāna* with minor changes in terminology. Obviously this needs to be argued in detail.

The format of *Paṭṭhāna* is somewhat forbidding, although some of the

essential principles involved seem clear enough. The work introduces for the first time in Pali literature the twenty four types of relation (*paccaya*). These are illustrated by applying them to the twenty two triplets and one hundred couplets of the *abhidhamma-mātikā*—the mnemonic key which structures the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and is employed in the *Vibhaṅga* and *Dhātu-kathā*. The permutations and combinations involved are rather more complex than this. Warder calls it: 'one of the most amazing productions of the human mind'.[33] Fortunately most of the details are unnecessary for the present purpose.

We need only concern ourselves initially with two triplets, one couplet and one of the relations. The triplets are: 1. producing results; resultant; neither producing results nor resultant and 2. pleasant feeling; unpleasant feeling; neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling. The couplet is: caused; causeless. The only relation needed is the relation of succession (*anantara-paccaya*).

From the resultant triplet under the heading 'resultant dhamma related to dhamma neither producing results nor resultant by succession relation' we learn that '*bhavaṅga* is related to adverting by succession relation'.[34] From this it is apparent that *bhavaṅga* is some kind of resultant consciousness, while adverting is some kind of *kiriyā* mentality. The very fact that these terms are used indicates that they designate a group of *cittas* for which no alternative designation is available in the *Paṭṭhāna*. The commentarial usage of *bhavaṅga* which covers all kinds of resultant mentality except resultant mind element and causeless mind consciousness element with pleasant feeling would seem exactly suitable.

Adverting is already referred to as a function of mind element in the *Vibhaṅga*.[35] So we might expect the *kiriyā* mind element to be referred to here. However in the commentarial account given above we saw that the causeless *kiriyā* mind consciousness element (with neutral feeling) performs this function in a mind door process. The *Paṭṭhāna* is clearly of the same view and therefore required a special term in order to exclude the same element with pleasant feeling; for according to the commentaries this does not perform the function of adverting.

In the same triplet under the heading of 'dhamma neither producing results nor resultant is related to dhamma producing results by succession relation' we read: 'Adverting is related to fivefold consciousness by succession relation'. This seems quite clear as it stands. From the same triplet and relation we learn that: 'Fivefold consciousness is related to resultant mind element by succession relation' and 'Resultant mind element is related to resultant mind consciousness element by succession relation'. Here the commentaries restrict the resultant mind consciousness element concerned to the causeless types. From the same source we obtain: 'Resultant mind consciousness element is related to *kiriyā* mind consciousness element by succession relation'.

Later in the same portion of the *Paṭṭhāna* we find that: 'Adverting is related to aggregates which are dhammas producing results by succession relation', 'Preceding aggregates which are dhammas producing results are related to subsequent aggregates which are dhammas producing results by succession relation', 'Aggregates which are dhammas producing results [are related] to

emergence ... by succession relation' and 'Preceding resultant aggregates are related to subsequent resultant aggregates by succession relation'. Nowhere does the *Paṭṭhāna* permit succession from resultant to producing results nor does it allow succession from producing results to neither producing results nor resultant. The similarity to the tables of permissible and impermissible succession given above is manifest.

Additional information can be added by turning to the feeling triplet.[36] *Bhavaṅga* can have either pleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling, but adverting can only have neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling. The resultant mind consciousness element which follows resultant mind element may have pleasant feeling. The *kiriyā* mind consciousness which succeeds in turn must have neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling. Emergence (*vuṭṭhāna*) may have either pleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling.

From the caused couplet we can add:[37] 'Caused *bhavaṅga* [is related to] causeless adverting by succession relation', and vice versa; 'Caused *bhavaṅga* [is related to] causeless *bhavaṅga* by succession relation', and vice versa; 'Caused aggregates [are related to] causeless emergence by succession relation'; 'Causeless aggregates [are related to] caused emergence by succession relation'; [Causeless] adverting to caused aggregates'; '[Causeless] adverting to the [causeless] five consciousnesses'.

In fact almost all the stages of the consciousness process are precisely specified in the *Paṭṭhāna*. So much so that it is clear that we should attribute the theory to the canonical abhidhamma tradition—if not to the earlier abhidhamma then at least to the tradition or authors embodied in the *Paṭṭhāna*. Only a small amount of the technical nomenclature, some details and one significant development appear to be later.

The distinction between mind door and sense door process is known, although those terms are not used. Each of the separate functions is shown. This is best illustrated from the sense door process. *Bhavaṅga* is known by name, but that name is only used where it is needed to avoid ambiguity. In cases where the same statement can be accurately applied both to *javana* and to *bhavaṅga* the two stages are subsumed as 'aggregates' or they may be distinguished as e.g. 'skilful aggregates' and 'resultant aggregates'. The theory of *bhavaṅga* is however fully developed.

The rootless *kiriyā* consciousnesses with neutral feeling are already termed adverting. The succeeding sense consciousnesses are termed the five consciousnesses and succeeded by resultant mind element, which is in turn followed by resultant mind consciousness element with either neutral or pleasant feeling. After this comes *kiriyā* mind consciousness element with neutral feeling, which when specified as adverting is rootless and succeeded by the variety of states which the later tradition calls *javana*. Apart from the last each of these lasts for only one moment. Indeed the *Paṭṭhāna* even allows for the fruitless case in which establishing is unable to bring about the arising of *javana* and simply repeats for one moment.[38] It does not however specify the duration.

The specific names are absent for only three of the functions: receiving, investigating and establishing. Significantly the *mahāṭīkā* to the *Visuddhimagga* comments:[39]

> For those who do not accept the process *cittas* beginning with receiving as well as the heart base, the text (*pāḷi*) has been handed down in various places with the words beginning 'for receiving, for eye consciousness element'; for the text cannot be set aside.

Unfortunately the text to which the *mahā-ṭīkā* refers is not known to us. The functions of receiving, investigating and establishing are not known from any surviving canonical work. In several commentaries there is a mnemonic verse listing the seven functions from *bhavaṅga* to *javana*;[40] no doubt this belongs to the period of the old Sinhalese commentaries if not earlier. The term *javana* is taken from the canonical *Paṭisambhidā-magga*,[41] where it is used in a similar sense. In any case the term adds little to the usage of the *Paṭṭhāna* apart from brevity. This is perhaps the significant contribution of the later terminology.

The *Paṭṭhāna* does not usually use the term *tad-ārammaṇa*. Normally what the later tradition refers to in this way is simply designated *bhavaṅga*—the after-*bhavaṅga* of the commentaries. Often however the *Paṭṭhāna* employs the expression 'emergence' (*vuṭṭhāna*) for *bhavaṅga* and *tad-ārammaṇa* indiscriminately. This is obviously an extension of the older usage of *vuṭṭhāna* to refer to emergence from *jhāna*. Such an extension is quite appropriate since the *jhānas* consist of a series of *javana cittas*; so emergence from *jhāna* constitutes the departure from *javana* par excellence. The *Paṭṭhāna* does however use the expression *vipāko tad-ārammaṇatā uppajjati* in its treatment of object relation (*ārammaṇa-paccaya*).[42] This must be the source of the later usage. Clearly emergence or *bhavaṅga* would be inappropriate here.

By the time of the Sinhalese commentaries two kinds of *tadārammaṇa* are distinguished under the names of root *bhavaṅga* and visiting *bhavaṅga*.[43] The term root *bhavaṅga* properly speaking should refer to that specific type of resultant consciousness which constantly recurs throughout the life of a given individual whenever there is no process at either the mind door or one of the sense doors. It is here extended to include a *tad-ārammaṇa* of the same type even although this would have a different object. However this is obviously closer to the usage of the *Paṭṭhāna*.

It is not in fact quite clear that the *Paṭṭhāna* knows the theory by which each individual has a single basic *bhavaṅga* mind throughout his lifespan. It is this theory which necessitates the distinction of a separate stage of *tad-ārammaṇa*. Many of our earlier sources are a little inconsistent in this regard. The mnemonic verse mentioned above does not include *tad-ārammaṇa* and neither do most of the traditional similes. There is even some uncertainty as to exactly how many moments of *tad-ārammaṇa* can occur—the *Visuddhimagga* records two different traditions on the matter.[44] It may well be the case that the debates recorded in

the *Vipākuddhāra-kathā* reveal the process by which the somewhat later theory of *tad-ārammaṇa* was finally formulated.

The *Paṭṭhāna* itself envisages only that kammically active stages arise and persist for a while. It does not specify seven moments as the maximum duration. It certainly envisages a return to a resultant consciousness. This may be one under the influence of the active aggregates which have just subsided or it may be one of a more long lasting kind. It does not however seem to specify the latter to be unchangeable or lifelong, but the possibility that this is what is intended cannot be ruled out.

Conclusion

It is clear that the theory of the consciousness process is well established in the *Paṭṭhāna*, a work which cannot be later than the second century B.C. To what extent it is to be found in earlier works such as the *Vibhaṅga* remains an open question, but the theory is not a product of the commentarial stage. It belongs rather to the classic abhidhamma.

With such a dating we need also to look again at its possible role in the development of Indian thought. If we assume that at least the idea of *bhavaṅga* mind was current also in other South Indian schools,[45] then the question should be asked as to what influence similar ideas may have had on the early Vijñānavāda.

Notes

This article is a revised version of a paper originally presented in April 1977 at the Third Symposium on Indian Religions, Durham.

1 E. Lamotte, 'Traité de la démonstration de l'acte', *MCB* IV, 1936, p. 250; 'L'Ālayavijñāna dans le Mahāyānasaṃgraha', *MCB*, III, 1935, pp. 207–15; *La somme du grand véhicule*, II, Louvain, Muséon, 1938, pp. 24 foll., 8* foll.; L. De La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi: La Siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang*, I, Paris, 1928, pp. 179, 196, 198.
2 (Ce 1954) p. 17.
3 A. Bareau, *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, Paris, EFEO, 1955, p. 183.
4 O. H. de Wijesekera ('Canonical references to bhavaṅga', in Wijesekera, *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume*, Colombo, 1976, pp. 348–52) has put forward an interesting defence of the reading *bhavaṅgam* at A II 79. On balance, however, it seems that Buddhaghosa's reading of *bhavaggaṃ* is preferable in view of A III 202 where *bhavānaṃ aggo* is interpreted along the lines of his comment on *bhavaggaṃ*; cf. also S III 83. However it is quite likely that in the orthography of Pāli manuscripts in Brahmī script such as Buddhaghosa would have had before him, the readings *bhavaṅga* and *bhavagga* would be indistinguishable.
5 Mil 299–300.
6 A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1923, p. 194.
7 E. R. Sarathchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, Colombo, Ceylon University Press, 1958, p. 79.
8 Nett 79.
9 Peṭ 98.
10 See the introductions to his PTS translations of Nett and Peṭ.

11 Nett Introduction p. XXXII.
12 Vism 460.
13 The *Visuddhimagga* gives a very systematic account. The three main passages occur in its treatment of the consciousness aggregate (Vism 457–60), in its description of the arising of consciousness as the third link of the dependent origination formula (Vism 546 foll.) and also in the discussion of *arūpa-sammasana* (Vism 617–8). It is nevertheless clear that the *Aṭṭhasālinī* preserves earlier material, particularly in the *Vipākuddhāra-kathā* (As 267–87) and to some extent also in the *Dvāra-kathā* (As 82–106). Both of these sources were obviously drawn upon for the Suttanta commentaries also. Notable however is the comment on *sampajañña* at Sv I 194–5, Ps I 262–3, Spk III 191–2, Vibh-a 355–6; Mp III 199 cites Sv.
14 Vism 456.
15 As 271; Vism 547.
16 Vism 458, cf. 554.
17 Vism 483 (mhṭ) = Moh 126; Spk I 180; II 358; It-a I 101; Paṭis-a I 79.
18 As 140; 262; 308; cf. Paṭis I 80; Paṭis-a I 293–4; Ps I 167; Mp I 60 foll.; Dhp-a I 23.
19 Sv-pṭ to Sv I 194 (*mūla-pariññā*).
20 As 72; Vism 617; Moh 21.
21 As 269 foll.; 292–3; Vism 458; 546; Sv III 1037; Spk I 151; Vbh-a 9; Ud-a 203.
22 Vism 456.
23 As 279.
24 As 280–1.
25 As 269; cf. Vism 459; 617; Ps II 226.
26 Sarathchandra, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
27 As 267–87.
28 Vism 103–4.
29 As 82–106.
30 E. W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, Gunasena, 1953, pp. 1–42.
31 A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, pp. 321–5.
32 Vism Trsl. p. 131 n.; cf. also p. 515 n.
33 Warder *op. cit.*, p. 309.
34 The truncated PTS edition (Tikap) omits; see U Nārada, *Conditional Relations* (CR I), PTS, 1969, pp. 406–7 and Paṭṭh I (Ce 1954) 260.
35 Vibh 89: *sabbadhammesu. . . . paṭhamasamannāhāro*, cf. Moh 128.
36 Tikap 324–6; CR I 338–40.
37 Dukap 45–6; Paṭṭh II (Ce 1954) 668.
38 Tikap-a 259–60; CR I 416.
39 Vism-mhṭ (Ce 1930) 479: *Ye hadaya-vatthu viya sampaṭicchanâdivīthi-cittāni pi nânujānanti, tesaṃ: 'sampaṭicchanāya cakkhu-viññāṇadhātuyā' ti ādinā tattha tattha pāḷi āgatā; na hi sakkā pāḷiṃ paṭisedhetuṃ.*
40 Sv I 194; Ps I 262; Spk III 191; Vibh-a 355.
41 Paṭis I 80–1.
42 e.g. Tikap 155; CR I 143.
43 As 270–1; 276; 285; 287; 360; Tikap 347; Spk III 71; Abhidh-av 50–1.
44 Vism 547; cf. Vism 459; As 265.
45 Buddhaghosa (Kv-a 219) certainly attributes such views to the Andhakas. We should perhaps think of the *mūla-vijñāna* which Asaṅga attributes to the Mahāsāṅghikas. It is not certain how far Buddhaghosa is correct in seeing Kv chap. X, I as referring to *bhavaṅga*.

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NIBBĀNA AND ABHIDHAMMA

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The nature of nibbāna in the teaching of the Buddha was already a subject of discussion in ancient times. More recently it has been much debated both in modern Western scholarship and also in more traditional Buddhist circles.[1] One issue which has recently been a focus for discussion is the ontological status of nibbāna. Is it some kind of metaphysical absolute? Or is it better seen as the mere cessation of suffering or even as a total ending of existence?

In the nikāyas

A definitive answer to this question cannot easily be found on the basis of the *nikāya* material. Some passages would seem to suggest that nibbāna refers initially to the destruction of defilements at the attainment of enlightenment but ultimately more particularly to the consequent extinction of the aggregates making up the mind and body complex at the time of death. Other passages can be used in support of the belief that nibbāna is some kind of absolute reality. Nevertheless it is evident that most relevant contexts in the Sutta-piṭaka are so worded as to avoid any commitment on this issue. This is clearly intentional.

Such a manner of proceeding has many parallels in early Buddhist thought. The most well-known example is probably the ten unanswered questions of Māluṅkyaputta, but some other questions are treated in the same way in the suttas.[2] The accompanying passages make it quite clear that the main reason for not answering these kinds of question is because they 'are not connected with the spirit, not connected with the letter, not belonging to beginning the holy life, (they) conduce neither to turning away, nor to passionlessness, nor to cessation nor to peace nor to higher knowledge nor to full awakening nor to nibbāna'. This of course is illustrated with the parable of the arrow which strongly suggests that answering such questions would only give rise to endless further questions. The attempt to answer them would take up too much time and distract from the urgent need to follow the path towards the goal.

Some scholars, notably K.N. Jayatilleke, have suggested that this was partly because no meaningful answer was possible. There may be something in this,

but the texts do not seem to go quite so far. More emphasis is laid on the need to avoid one-sided views, particularly eternalism and annihilationism. Acceptance of such ways of seeing things would become fertile soil for various kinds of craving which would themselves lead to further or more fixed views, thus creating or rather furthering the vicious circle of unhealthy mentality. Clearly this would defeat the very purpose of the Buddha's teaching. The Buddhist tradition is very emphatic that Buddhas only teach what is conducive to the goal.

This is perhaps worth spelling out in a little more detail. If body and soul (*jīva*) are one and the same thing, then physical death entails annihilation of the individual. If however they are distinct (and unrelated?), then death does not necessarily entail individual extinction and personal immortality might be inferred. These views are not necessarily wrong. They are however partial and misleading; exclusive adherence to them will lead to trouble. The Buddha's simile of the blind men and the elephant (Sn – a 529) illustrates this perfectly. Each blind man correctly recounted his experience of some part of the elephant. Unfortunately each one wrongly generalized his experience and insisted on its unique validity. In the end they came to blows! In fact the elephant was much more than partial experience led each blind man to suppose.

Similarly in the Brahmajālasutta the majority of wrong views are based upon genuine meditation experience and knowledge, but this has been incorrectly interpreted and dogmatically asserted: 'this is truth, all else is foolishness'. Only a minority of views are the products of reasoning. Without a basis in experience this too can only lead to obsession. If the existence or non-existence of the Tathāgata after death is not specified, this is surely to avoid the two alternatives of eternalism and annihilationism. If the Tathāgata were declared to exist after death, then the Buddhist goal is some kind of immortality. Such a view would lead to some form of craving for renewed existence – the very thing to be abandoned. If on the other hand the Tathāgata were stated to be non-existent after death, then either craving for non-existence – yet another obstacle – would arise or the motivation to follow the path would be eroded.

The Buddha's silence makes very good sense in this light. Provided that is that the immense strength of these two types of viewpoint and their associated craving is recognised. For the Buddhist they are understood as pervading and distorting in one direction or the other all our normal modes of thought. Provided also that the path set forth by the Buddha is seen not so much as an alternative way of salvation comparable to others but more as a deliberate attempt to reduce the spiritual life to its bare essentials and to trim away everything redundant. The Buddha therefore teaches only what is necessary without making any attempt to satisfy intellectual curiosity where this would not be profitable. So it is emphasized that the Tathāgata does not teach things which are true but serve no useful purpose or may even create obstacles for the hearer.

The account of nibbāna given in the *nikāyas* is clear and cogent. Much can be said in praise of nibbāna to encourage the seeker, especially if it is in the form of simile or metaphor. Such we find frequently. But there must be nothing so concrete

as to encourage attachment or dogmatic convictions. Beyond this the Buddha did not wish to go. The *nikāyas* never depart wholly from this position. Passages which can be used to support a 'metaphysical' interpretation do not do so unambiguously. Nor is nibbāna ever unequivocally depicted as total annihilation. What we find are hints and suggestions, but never enough to undermine the fundamental aim.

The apparent ambiguity is not carelessness or inconsistency. It is not that 'the ancient Buddhist tradition was not clear on the nature of Nirvāṇa'.[3] Rather it was quite clear that it did not wish us to be too clear! Nor is it that 'Nirvāṇa had several meanings, and . . . was variously interpreted'.[4] Such a view does not see the interconnectedness and internal consistency of the Buddhist dhamma. The apparent ambivalence here arises centrally by the force of the dialectic of early Buddhism. If that dialectic is understood, the ambiguities and silences appear profoundly integral to the Buddha's message of salvation.

Nibbāna in the Abhidhamma-pitaka

Whereas the sutta material on the subject of nibbāna is often cited and has been the source of much controversy, it does not appear that abhidhamma material is so well-known. There may then be some value in drawing attention to certain aspects. The abhidhamma position is already clearly formulated in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi (Dhs), the first and no doubt oldest work in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka.[5] The term nibbāna is not used in the main body of Dhs which prefers the expression *asaṅkhatā dhātu*. This is usually translated as 'unconditioned element', i.e. that which is not produced by any cause or condition. Presumably this would mean 'that which is independent of relatedness'.

This interpretation of the term is supported by the Nikkhepa-kaṇḍa, in which the Mātikā couplet – *saṅkhata/asaṅkhata* – is explained as equivalent to the previous couplet – *sappaccaya/appaccaya*, i.e. conditioned/unconditioned.[6] The first term in each case is explained as referring to the five aggregates. So for Dhs the unconditioned element is different to the five aggregates. From this point of view something *saṅkhata* exists *in relation* to other things as part of a complex of mutually dependent phenomena.

The use of the term *asaṅkhatā dhātu* probably derives from the Bahudhātuka-sutta[7], where it is one of a series of explanations as to how a monk is *dhātukusala. Dhātu* usually translated by 'element' seems always to refer to a distinct sphere of experience: visible object is experientially distinct from auditory object, from organ of sight, from consciousness of sight, etc.; earth is distinct from water, etc.; pleasant bodily feeling from unpleasant bodily feeling, etc.; sense-desire from aversion, etc.; sense-objects from form or the formless. Likewise the unconditioned and the conditioned are quite distinct as objects of experience. Usually the analysis into *dhātu* is intended to facilitate insight into non-self. Presumably the purpose here is to distinguish conceptually the unconditioned element of enlightened experience in order to clarify retrospective understanding of the fruit attainment (*phalasamāpatti*).

Asaṅkhata occurs occasionally on its own in the *nikāyas*. The most conspicuous occasion is in the Asaṅkhata-saṃyutta (S IV 359–68), where it is defined as the destruction of passion, hatred and delusion. In this context it is clearly applied to the Third Noble Truth. In the Aṅguttara-nikāya (I 152) the three unconditioned characteristics of the unconditioned are that 'arising is not known, ceasing is not known, alteration of what is present is not known'. These are opposed to the equivalent characteristics of the conditioned. In the Cūlavedallasutta of the Majjhima-nikāya (I 300) the Noble Eightfold Path is declared to be conditioned. In the Aṅguttara-nikāya (II 34) the Path is called the highest of conditioned dhammas, but nibbāna (plus synonyms) is declared to be the highest when conditioned and unconditioned things are taken together.

It is, however, the verbal form corresponding to the much more frequent *saṅkhāra*. *A saṅkhāra* is an activity which enables something to come into existence or to maintain its existence – it fashions or forms things. So something which is *saṅkhata* has been fashioned or formed by such an activity, especially by volition. The reference is of course to the second link in the chain of Conditioned Co-origination. The succeeding links refer to that which is *saṅkhata*, i.e. fashioned by volitional activity (from this or a previous life). Since this amounts to the five aggregates, the whole mind-body complex, it is virtually equivalent to the meanings given above.

The Nikkhepa-kaṇḍa (Dhs 180–234) gives a surprising amount of information about nibbāna in its explanation of the Mātikā. Before setting this out, it may be helpful to point out that the twenty two triplets which commence the Mātikā embody a definite conceptual order. The first five clearly concern the process of rebirth and the law of *kamma*. Then follow two connected with *jhāna*, after which are nine triplets concerning the path (*magga*). The final six seem to relate especially to nibbāna. This is not accidental. The intention is certainly to indicate an ascending order. This is perhaps more clear if set out in full, but in the present context I will confine myself to tabulating the information given concerning the unconditioned element only in the Nikkhepa-kaṇḍa expansion of the triplets, listed in numerical order.

Asaṅkhatā dhātu and the abhidhamma triplets

1. It is indeterminate
   i.e. not classifiable as skilful or unskilful action. Here it is taken with purely resultant mental activity, with *kiriya* action particularly that of the arahat who does what the situation requires and with all matter.
2. is not classified as linked (*sampayutta*) with feeling
   i.e. not in the intimate connection with feeling which applies to mind. Here it is taken with feeling itself and with matter.
3. is neither resultant nor giving results
   Here it is taken with *kiriya* action and matter.

4. has not been taken possession of and is not susceptible of being taken possession of
   i.e. it is not due to *upādāna* in the past nor can it be the object of *upādāna* in the present – the reference is of course to Dependent Origination. Here it is taken with the Paths and Fruits.
5. is not tormented and not connected with torment
   i.e. not associated with *saṅkilesa* nor able to lead to such association in the future. Here again it is taken with the Paths and Fruits.
6. is not with *vitakka* and *vicāra*
   i.e. not in the close association with these activities which applies to mind. Here it is taken with matter, the mentality of the higher *jhānas* and pure sense consciousness.
7. is not classified as associated with joy, happiness or equipoise
   i.e. not in the close connection with one or other of these which applies to the mind of the *jhānas*, paths or fruits. Here it is taken with matter, some feeling, painful tactile consciousness and aversion consciousness.
8. is not to be abandoned either by seeing or by practice
   i.e. not eliminated by one of the four paths. Here it is taken with everything which is not unskilful including matter.
9. is not connected with roots to be abandoned by seeing or by practice
   i.e. similar to the preceding triplet
10. leads neither to accumulation nor dispersal
    i.e. does not take part in any kind of kamma activity whether skilful or unskilful not even the dispersive activity of the four paths. Here it is taken with resultant mental activity, *kiriya* action and matter.
11. is neither under training nor trained
    i.e. distinct from supermundane consciousness. Here it is taken with matter and all mentality in the three levels.
12. is immeasurable
    i.e. superior both to the very limited mind and matter of the sense spheres and to the less restricted mind of the form and formless levels. Here it is taken with supramundane consciousness.
13. is not classified as having a small object, one which has become great or one which is immeasurable
    i.e. the unconditioned element does not require any object (*ārammaṇa*) in contrast to mentality which requires an object in order to come into being. Here it is taken with matter.
14. is refined
    i.e. superior both to the inferior mentality associated with unskilfulness and to the medium quality of the remaining aggregates in the three levels. Here it is taken with supramundane consciousness.
15. is without fixed destiny
    i.e. does not involve a definite kamma result. Here it is taken with everything except the four paths and certain kinds of unskilfulness.

16. is not classified as having the path as object, as connected with path roots or as having the path as overlord
    i.e. does not have an object. Here it is taken especially with matter.
17. is not classified as arisen, not arisen, going to arise
    i.e. classification in these terms is inappropriate for the unconditioned element which cannot be viewed in such terms – it is non-spatial. Here it is classified on its own.
18. is not classified as past, future or present
    i.e. it is non-temporal. Here again it is classified on its own.
19. is not classified as having past, future or present objects
    i.e. it does not have an object. Here it is taken with matter.
20. is not classified as within, without or both
    i.e. it is not kamma-born. However the Aṭṭhakathākaṇḍa of the Dhs, which gives further comment on the Mātikā, traditionally attributed to Sāriputta, adds here that nibbāna and inanimate matter (*anindriyabaddharūpa*) are without whereas all other dhammas may be within or without or both. Probably it is following Vibh 115 which classifies the Third Truth as without. The difference is perhaps due to an ambiguity in the terminology. Without can be taken in two ways: a) without = the within of other people; b) without = everything which is not within. Nibbāna cannot be 'within' as it is not kamma-born.
21. is not classified as having an object which is within or without or both
    i.e. it does not have an object. Here it is taken with matter.
22. cannot be pointed out and does not offer resistance
    i.e. it is quite different to most matter and by implication can only be known by mind. Here it is taken with mentality and some very subtle matter.

In general the Mātikā couplets do not add much to our understanding of nibbāna. One point however is worth noting. The first three couplets of the Mahantaraduka are merely a different arrangement of the four fundamentals of the later abhidhamma: *citta, cetasika, rūpa* and nibbāna. Taking this in conjunction with the explanation of the triplets summarized above, we can say that the Dhammasaṅgaṇi makes very clear that the unconditioned element is quite different to the five aggregates – at least as different from the aggregates as their constituents are from one another.

The unconditioned is not matter, although like matter it is inactive from a kammic point of view and does not depend upon an object as a reference point. It is not any kind of mental event or activity nor is it the consciousness which is aware of mind and matter, although it can be compared in certain respects with the mentality of the paths and fruits. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi often classifies paths, fruits and the unconditioned together as 'the unincluded (*apariyāpanna*)', i.e. not included in the three levels. Later tradition refers to this as the nine supramundane dhammas. The unincluded consciousness, unincluded mental activities and unconditioned element are alike in that they are not able to associate with *upādāna* or

with any kind of torment (*kilesa*), they are all 'immeasurable' and they are all 'refined'. The unconditioned element is unique in that it is not classifiable in terms of arising or as past, present or future. Suggestively, however, it may be reckoned as *nāma* rather than *rūpa*.[8] This does seem to suggest some element of underlying idealism of the kind which emerges later in the Vijñānavāda.

In other Abhidhamma works

The description given in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi is followed very closely in later canonical abhidhamma texts. The Vibhaṅga, for example, gives the identical account in its treatment of the truths, taking the third truth as equivalent to the unconditioned element.[9] The Dhātukathā does likewise.[10] Some of this material can also be found in the Paṭṭhāna which sometimes deals with nibbāna as an object condition. The Paṭisambhidā-magga, which contains much abhidhammic material although not formally in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, also treats the third truth as unconditioned. Equally, however, it emphasises the unity of the truths: 'In four ways the four truths require one penetration: in the sense of being thus (*tathaṭṭhena*), in the sense of being not self, in the sense of being truth, in the sense of penetration. In these four ways the four truths are grouped as one. What is grouped as one is a unity. A unity is penetrated by one knowledge – in this way the four truths require one penetration'.[11]

The four ways are each expanded. One example may suffice: 'How do the four truths require one penetration? What is impermanent is suffering. What is impermanent and suffering is not self. What is impermanent and suffering and not self is thus. What is impermanent and suffering and not self and thus is truth. What is impermanent and suffering and not self and thus and truth is grouped as one. What is grouped as one is a unity. A unity is penetrated by one knowledge – in this way the four truths require one penetration.'

This of course is the characteristic teaching of the Theravāda school that the penetration of the truths in the path moments occurs as a single breakthrough to knowledge (*ekābhisamaya*) and not by separate intuitions of each truth in different aspects. We find this affirmed in the Kathāvatthu[12], but the fullest account occurs in the Peṭakopadesa[13] which gives similes to illustrate simultaneous knowledge of the four truths. One of these is the simile of the rising sun: 'Or just as the sun when rising accomplishes four tasks at one time without (any of them being) before or after – it dispels darkness, it makes light appear, it makes visible material objects and it overcomes cold, in exactly the same way calm and insight when occurring coupled together perform four tasks at one time in one moment in one consciousness – they break through to knowledge of suffering with a breakthrough by comprehending (the aggregates), they break through to knowledge of arising with a breakthrough by abandoning (the defilements), they break through to knowledge of cessation with a breakthrough by realizing (direct experience of nibbāna), they break through to knowledge of path with a breakthrough by developing.'

At first sight this runs counter to the characteristic Theravādin emphasis on the distinctiveness and uniqueness of nibbāna as the only *asaṅkhata* dhamma. This is most clear in the Kathāvatthu although obviously present elsewhere.[14] Here a series of possible candidates for additional unconditioned dhammas are presented and rejected. What is interesting is the argument used. Essentially the point is made that this would infringe upon the unity of nibbāna. The idea of a plurality of nibbānas is then rejected because it would involve either a distinction of quality between them or some kind of boundary or dividing line between them. André Bareau finds some difficulty in understanding this as it involves conceiving nibbāna as a place and he rightly finds this surprising.[15] However, the argument is more subtle than he allows. What is being put forward is a reductio ad absurdum. The argument may be expressed as follows: the unconditioned is by definition not in any temporal or spatial relation to *anything*. Qualitatively it is superior to *everything*. If then two unconditioneds are posited, two refutations are possible. Firstly, either only one of them is superior to everything and the other inferior to that one or both are identical in quality. Obviously if one is superior then only that one is unconditioned. Secondly, for there to be two unconditioneds, there must be some dividing line or distinguishing feature. If there is, then *neither* would be unconditioned since such a division or dividing line would automatically bring both into the relative realm of the conditioned. Of course if there is no distinguishing feature and they are identical in quality, it is ridiculous to talk of two unconditions.

One thing is clear. Both in their interpretation of the nature of the unconditioned and in their understanding of the nature of knowledge of the four truths the Theravādin abhidhamma opts for a far more unitive view than the Sarvāstivādin. This is certainly due to what Bareau calls 'la tendance mystique des Theravādin'.[16] We may say that the Theravādin abhidhammikas retained a closer relationship to their original foundation of meditative experience.

A unitary view of the truths has been interpreted in terms of 'sudden enlightenment', but it has not often been noticed that it involves a rather different view of the relationship between nibbāna and the world. This is significant. The view of nibbāna set forth in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi appears to be in other respects common to the ancient schools of abhidhamma. The Sarvāstivādin Prakaraṇapāda, for example, has much of the same material.[17] It seems clear that although lists of unconditioned dharmas varied among the schools to some extent, they were all agreed that there were unconditioned dharmas and that the unconditioned dharma(s) were not the mere absence of the conditioned. Only the Sautrāntikas and allied groups disputed this last point. It seems clear that their position is a later development based upon a fresh look at the Sūtra literature among groups which did not accord the status of authentic word of the Buddha to the abhidharma literature.

The Dhammasaṅgaṇi account is perhaps the earliest surviving abhidhammic description of nibbāna. It is certainly representative of the earlier stages of the abhidhamma phase of Buddhist literature. Of course some of the *nikāya* pas-

sages cited above appear to suggest a very similar position. Very likely some of these were utilized in the composition of the Dhammasaṅgaṇi, but this is not certain. At all events both are the products of a single direction of development giving rise to the abhidhamma. We may suggest that this represents a slightly more monist conception of nibbāna as against the silence of most of the suttas. Nevertheless such a position was at least implicit from the beginning.

J.R. Carter has drawn attention to the frequent commentarial identification of the word dhamma as *catusaccadhamma* (dhamma of the four truth) and *navavidha lokuttara dhamma* (ninefold supramundane dhamma).[18] Here again a close relationship between nibbāna and the five aggregates or between nibbāna and supramundane mentality is implicit. What emerges from this is a different kind of model to those often given in Western accounts of Buddhism which seem to suggest that one has to somehow leave *saṃsāra* in order to come to nibbāna. Such language is peculiar in relation to a reality which is neither spatial nor temporal. No place or time can be nearer to or further from the unconditioned.

It can perhaps be said that the supramundane mentality is somehow more like nibbāna than anything else. Compare, for example, the simile of Sakka in the Mahā-Govinda-suttanta: 'Just as the water of the Ganges flows together and comes together with the water of the Yamuna, even so because the path has been well laid down for disciples by the Lord, it is a path which goes to nibbāna, both nibbāna and path flow together.'[19] Nevertheless nibbāna is not somewhere else. It is 'to be known *within* by the wise'.[20] 'In this fathom-long sentient body is the world, its arising, its ceasing and the way leading thereto.'[21]

Bareau has shown[22] that the Theravādin abhidhamma retains an earlier usage of the term *asaṅkhata* as uniquely referring to nibbāna. The other abhidhamma schools are in this respect more developed and multiply the number of unconditioned dharmas. Inevitably this tended to devalue the term. So much so that the Mahāyāna tends to reject its application to the ultimate truth. Bareau is surely right to suggest that there is a certain similarity between the original unconditioned and the emptiness of the Mādhyamika. To a certain extent the Mahāyāna reaction is a return to the original position if not completely so.

A similar situation occurs with the peculiarly Theravādin position of a single breakthrough to knowledge.[23] So far as I know, it has not been pointed out how much nearer this is to the position of the early Mahāyāna than to the Vaibhāṣika viewpoint. The Theravāda does not reify dhammas to anything like the extent found in the Sarvāstivādin abhidharma. Nor does it separate *saṃsāra* and nibbāna as dualistic opposites: knowledge of *dukkha* i.e. *saṃsāra* and knowledge of its cessation i.e. nibbāna are one knowledge at the time of the breakthrough to knowing dhamma.

To summarize the kind of evolution suggested here: we may say that the main force of the *nikāyas* is to discount speculation about nibbāna. It is the *summum bonum*. To seek to know more is to manufacture obstacles. Beyond this only a few passages go. No certain account of the ontological status of nibbāna

can be derived from the *nikāyas*. It cannot even be shown with certainty that a single view was held. By the time of the early abhidhamma the situation is much clearer. The whole Buddhist tradition is agreed that nibbāna is the unconditioned dhamma, neither temporal nor spatial, neither mind (in its usual form) nor matter, but certainly not the mere absence or cessation of other dhammas. The uniformity of this tradition is certainly a strong argument for projecting this position into the *nikāyas* and even for suggesting that it represents the true underlying position of the suttas.

In North India where the Sarvāstivādin abhidharma eventually established a commanding position, the term dharma came to be interpreted as a 'reality' and given some kind of ontological status as part of a process of reification of Buddhist terms. Nirvāṇa then tends to become a metaphysical 'other', one among a number of realities. In the South, at least among the Theravādins, dhamma retains its older meaning of a less reified, more experiential kind. It is a fact of experience as an aspect of the saving truth taught by the Buddha, but not a separately existing reality 'somewhere else'.

So the four truths are dhamma. Broken up into many separate pieces they are still dhamma. As separate pieces they exist only as parts of a complex net of relations apart from which they cannot occur at all. This is *saṃsāra*. Nibbāna alone does not exist as part of a network. Not being of temporal or spatial nature it cannot be related to that which is temporal or spatial – not even by the relation of negation! Nevertheless it is not somewhere else. Saṃsāra is much more like a house built on cards than a solid construction. Only ignorance prevents the collapse of its appearance of solidity. With knowledge nibbāna is as it were seen where before only an illusory reality could be seen.

Notes

1 I am indebted to Ven. Ananda Maitreya for a fascinating verbal account of some controversies on this topic in Ceylon. References in E. Lamotte *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, Louvain 1958, p.43, n.57. A survey of some earlier Western scholarship in G.R. Welbon *The Buddhist Nirvāṇa and its Western Interpreters*, Chicago 1968 (reviewed by J.W. de Jong in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* I, Dordrecht 1972, pp.396–403).

For other views see: K.N. Jayatilleke *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, London 1963, pp.475–6; D.J. Kalupahana *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Honolulu 1975, e.g. p.179; *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, Honolulu 1976, pp.87ff.; A.D.P. Kalansuriya 'Two Modern Sinhalese views of nibbāna', *Religion* IX, 1, London 1979; K. Werner *Yoga and Indian Philosophy*, Delhi 1977, pp.77–81; E. Lamotte *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, London 1976, pp.LX–LXXII; D.S. Ruegg *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, Paris 1969 (for the developed Mahāyāna); J.W. de Jong 'The Absolute in Buddhist Thought', *Essays in Philosophy* presented to Dr T.M.P. Mahadevan, Madras 1962 (repr. in *Buddhist Studies*. Selected Essays of J.W.de Jong, Berkeley 1979); André Bareau *L'Absolu en philosophie bouddhique* (Paris 1951) covers some of the same ground as this article in his earlier sections, but my interpretation differs somewhat.

2 The ten unanswered questions are put by Maluṅkyaputta at M I 426ff., by Uttiya at

A V 193ff., by Poṭṭhapada at D I 187ff, and by Vacchagotta at S IV 395ff. Four of them are discussed by Sāriputta and by an unnamed bhikkhu at S II 222ff. and A IV 68ff. A much larger list is treated in the same way at D III 135ff., while a whole section of the Saṃyutta-nikāya (IV 374–403) is devoted to these questions. Of course, this kind of expansion and variation is exactly what is to be expected with the mnemonic formulae of an oral tradition. The issue is being looked at from various slightly different angles.

3 Louis de La Vallée Poussin *The Way to Nirvāṇa*, Cambridge 1917 (repr. Delhi 1982), p. 134.

4 Edward Washburn Hopkins, cited by Welbon, *op.cit.*, p.238.

5 Not only does Dhs have a canonical commentary appended to it. It is also quite evident that it is presupposed by the other works of the Abhidhammapiṭaka (except Puggala-paññatti). Of course, the material which has been incorporated into the Vibhaṅga may be older than Dhs, but in its present form it is younger.

6 Dhs 192–3.

7 M III 63 from here it has been included in the lists of the Dasuttarasutta (D III 274).

8 Bareau is wrong to suggest that the Vibhaṅga contradicts this, since the Vibhaṅga definition of *nāma* is in the context of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, which automatically excludes the unconditioned element.

9 e.g. Vibh 112–5; 404ff.

10 Dhātuk 9 and *passim*.

11 Paṭis II 105.

12 Kv Chap.II 9, III 3–4.

13 Paṭ 134–5.

14 Kv Chap.VI 1–6, XIX 3–5.

15 Bareau, *op.cit.*, p.31.

16 *Ibid.*, p.253.

17 *Ibid.*, pp.47–61.

18 John Ross Carter *Dhamma. Western Academic and Sinhalese Buddhist Interpretations. A study of a religious concept.* Tokyo 1978.

19 D II 223.

20 D II 93; PṬC gives twenty-four *nikāya* references sv *akālika*.

21 S I 62; A II 48, 50.

22 *Op.cit.*

23 Closely related schools of the Vibhajyavādin group probably adopted the same position, but it was completely rejected by the Pudgalavādin and Sarvāstivādin groups. The Mahāsāṃghikas appear to have adopted a compromise (see Bareau *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, Saigon 1955, p.62).

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ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A NONEXISTENT OBJECT OF PERCEPTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Sarvāstivādin and Dārṣṭāntika theories

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I. Introduction

In the first five centuries C.E., both Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophical schools increasingly turned to the analysis of perception and specifically of the locus and existential status of objects of perception. These schools[1] elaborated their theories on the dynamics of the perceptual process as a whole through an examination of seemingly minor issues. Among these, the question of whether or not a nonexistent object can produce perception, and the explanations offered for the perception of objects of questionable existential status such as illusions and dream images, had significant ramifications for their interpretations of ordinary external or internal perception and cognitive functioning. On the one hand, admitting that nonexistent objects can stimulate the arising of perception not only undermines the existential status of the objects of ordinary perception, but also jeopardizes the possibility of certain knowledge. On the other hand, demanding that all perception depend only upon existent objects makes it extremely difficult to account for the perception of these objects that have questionable existential status.

Within Buddhism, this issue of a nonexistent object of perception was extensively treated in northern Indian Abhidharma texts. These discussions not only reveal the position of Buddhist Abhidharma schools, but also provide the indispensable background and context for understanding the epistemological positions of the later Buddhist logicians.[2] The Sarvāstivāda[3] and Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika[4] schools have particular importance because their positions best represent the two logically contrary views on this issue. The Sarvāstivādins hold that all perception requires an existent object, while the Dārṣṭāntikas admit that, in certain cases, the object is nonexistent.[5] This difference of opinion reflects a broader disagreement

concerning the dynamics of the perceptual process and its relation to other cognitive functions, such as memory and conceptual thought.

On this, as on many other issues, the opposing views of the Sarvāstivādins and Dārṣṭāntikas generated a complex and rich dialectic of argument. As will be shown, their recurrent and detailed arguments can be reduced to two basic concerns: developing a defensible model of the perceptual process, and accounting for the perception of objects of questionable existential status. The important texts that present the Sarvāstivādin position include the early Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma canon,[6] the Vibhāṣā commentaries,[7] and the later Sarvāstivādin expository works, notably Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Saṅghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra*, and the *Abhidharmadīpa*.[8] The Vibhāṣā commentaries and Saṅghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra* serve as the primary sources for Dārṣṭāntika views.[9] Harivarman's *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*[10] is also a valuable source for views often identical to those of the Dārṣṭāntikas presented elsewhere.[11]

Like many of the controversies between the Sarvāstivādins and Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntikas, their debates about perception often seem to revolve around minor, obscure, and inherited doctrinal issues. Closer inspection, however, shows that these debates, including those over perception, are actually structured according to two fundamental disagreements. The first concerns the way in which constituent factors of experience (*dharma*) are thought to exist.[12] The Sarvāstivādins argue that factors exist as real entities (*dravya*) in the three time periods of past, present, and future. As such, they are defined as intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), characterized by a particular inherent characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*). Given appropriate causes and conditions, these existent factors manifest a particular activity (*kāritra*), which then defines them as present. However, since factors also exist as past or future, they are capable of serving as conditions in those states as well. Saṅghabhadra defines this past and future functioning of a factor as capability (*sāmarthya*), thereby distinguishing it from that factor's activity (*kāritra*), which occurs only in the present.

By contrast, the Dārṣṭāntikas equate a factor's existence with its present activity. One cannot meaningfully distinguish a factor's intrinsic nature from its activity, and thereby speak of its existence in the past or future. Further, they argue, factors do not exist as isolated units of intrinsic nature that manifest a particular activity through the influence of other isolated conditions. For the Dārṣṭāntikas, the process of causal interrelation is the only fact of experience; the fragmentation of this process into discrete factors possessed of individual existence and unique efficacy is only a mental fabrication.

The second fundamental area of disagreement between the Sarvāstivādins and the Dārṣṭāntikas concerns the dynamics of conditionality.[13] The Sarvāstivādins allow both successive and simultaneous models of causation: certain causes (*hetu*) or conditions (*pratyaya*) arise prior to their effects, while others, which exert a supportive conditioning efficacy, arise simultaneously with them. The Dārṣṭāntikas, however, allow only successive causation; a cause must always precede its effect. These basic disagreements about the nature of

existents and causality consequently set the framework within which the Sarvāstivādins and Dārṣṭāntikas conducted their debates.

II. The Sarvāstivādin model of perception

In order to construct their model of perception, the northern Indian Abhidharma schools begin from the description of perception found in the scripture. There, a given type of perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*) is said to arise in dependence upon a sense organ and an object.[14] Both the sense organ and the object are necessary conditions; if either is lacking, perceptual consciousness will not arise.[15] There are six such sense organs and six corresponding objects, referred to as the twelve sense spheres (*āyatana*), which together with their six corresponding types of perceptual consciousness constitute the eighteen elements (*dhātu*), of which all experience is composed. These eighteen elements include the five external objects, the five externally directed sense organs, and the five corresponding types of externally directed perceptual consciousness. Internal mental awareness is also analysed according to the model of external sensory perception: the previous moment of perceptual consciousness, which serves as the mental organ, and mental factors condition the arising of a corresponding moment of mental perceptual consciousness.[16]

In their attempts to clarify aspects of the perceptual process left ambiguous in the scripture, Abhidharma texts focus their examination of perception on three questions: 1) what has the power of sensing the object: the sense organ, perceptual consciousness, or some other mental faculty; 2) what is the character of mental perceptual consciousness, and how does it differ from the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness; and 3) in what sense do the sense organ and object act as conditions for the arising of perceptual consciousness, and what is the specific character of the object perceived? In their divergent answers to these questions, the northern Indian Abhidharma schools developed different models of the process of perception.

For the Sarvāstivāda school, the perceptual process begins with the sense organ (*indriya*), or basis (*āśraya*) that senses or grasps an object-field (*viṣaya*) appropriate to it. A given sense organ grasps an object-field, only when supported by perceptual consciousness;[17] nevertheless, this function of grasping the object-field is attributed only to the sense organ, and not to perceptual consciousness, or to some other thought concomitant (*caitta*)[18] associated with perceptual consciousness.[19] The function of perceptual consciousness consists simply in being aware of (*vijānāti*), or generically apprehending (*upalabdhi*) the nature of the object-field grasped by the sense organ.[20] In this way, the function of perceptual consciousness is distinguished from that of its associated thought concomitants (*caitta*). Perceptual consciousness generically apprehends the nature of a particular object-field: for example, visual perceptual consciousness grasps an object as visible material form. The associated thought concomitants, however, grasp the

particular characteristics of the object-field: for example, whether that object is pleasant or unpleasant, male or female, and so on.[21] In other words, perceptual consciousness apprehends only the particular characteristic of an object-field in its generic category as a sense sphere (*āyatanasvalakṣaṇa*): for example, as form, sound, and so on. It does not apprehend the distinguishing particular characteristic of a given object-field as an individual real entity (*dravyasvalakṣaṇa*) within that generic category. These individual particular characteristics are apprehended only by the associated thought concomitants.[22]

Each of the five externally directed sense organs is restricted in its functioning to one object-field: the eye can grasp only visible material form, the ear only sound, and so on. The object-field of the sense organ exists as a real entity (*dravyataḥ*), and not merely as a provisionally existing composite (*ho-ho, sāmagrī, saṃghāta?*).[23] Further, the appropriate sense organ grasps a particular object-field only when both are in the present time period. The present sense organ and present object-field then serve as conditions for the arising of a corresponding simultaneous instance of perceptual consciousness.[24] When apprehended in the present moment by perceptual consciousness and its associated thought concomitants, the object-field (*viṣaya*) is referred to as the object-support (*ālambana*).[25]

When the Sarvāstivādins assert that the externally directed sense organ, the external object-field, and the resulting externally directed perceptual consciousness must be present in the same moment, they assume a simultaneous model of conditioning. Indeed, to support their contention that conditions may arise simultaneously with their effect, the Sarvāstivādins cite the scriptural statement that perceptual consciousness arises in dependence upon two conditions.[26] The Sarvāstivādins further invoke the fact of direct perception as proof of the simultaneity of the sense organ, object-field, and perceptual consciousness. In direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), a momentary external object-field is grasped by a momentary externally directed sense organ and apprehended by an equally momentary instance of one of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness. This is possible only if the object-field, sense organ and perceptual consciousness are simultaneous.[27]

Mental perception differs from external perception in several significant respects. The mental organ (*manas*), which conditions the arising of a present moment of mental perceptual consciousness, is defined as the immediately preceding moment of perceptual consciousness, regardless of its type.[28] That is to say, any of the six varieties of perceptual consciousness may be designated as the mental organ for a subsequent moment of mental perceptual consciousness. Unlike the other five externally directed sense organs, this mental organ, precisely because it is past, cannot be said to perform its distinctive activity (*kāritra*) of sensing or grasping the object-support of the present moment of perceptual consciousness. Instead, it serves simply as the door, or immediately contiguous condition (*samanantarapratyaya*) for the arising of the present moment of mental perceptual consciousness, which then apprehends the object-support.[29] Therefore, unlike the five externally directed sense organs and corresponding

types of perceptual consciousness, the prior mental organ and its resultant present mental perceptual consciousness are not simultaneous, and do not necessarily share the same object-support.[30] Nevertheless, the two requisite conditions for the arising of a present moment of mental perceptual consciousness, that is, a basis (*āśraya*) and an object-support (*ālambana*), are still provided through the past mental organ and the object-support.

Mental perceptual consciousness also differs from the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness in its mode of operation. Mental perceptual consciousness not only apprehends the particular characteristic of an object-field in its generic category, for example, visible material form like the color blue, but also apprehends the designation, "this is blue." Thus, unlike the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, mental perceptual consciousness operates by means of designation (*adhivacana*), or names.[31]

In addition, mental perceptual consciousness is distinguished from the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness on the basis of the different types of conceptual thought (*vikalpa*) with which each is associated. According to the Sarvāstivādins, there are three types of conceptual thought:[32] 1) simple conceptual thought, or conceptual thought in its intrinsic nature (*svabhāvavikalpa*), which is identified with initial inquiry (*vitarka*);[33] 2) conceptual thought through discrimination (*abhinirūpaṇavikalpa*); and 3) conceptual thought through recollection (*anusmaraṇavikalpa*). Even though the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness are said, by tradition, to be without conceptual thought (*avikalpika*), the Sarvāstivādins interpret this as indicating that only the last two types of conceptual thought, that through discrimination and that through recollection, are absent.[34] Each moment of perceptual consciousness is associated with both insight (*prajñā*) and mindfulness (*smṛti*). When they are associated with mental perceptual consciousness they are strong and are identified, respectively, with conceptual thought through discrimination and conceptual thought through recollection. However, when insight and mindfulness are associated with the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, their activity is weak; therefore, the corresponding types of conceptual thought are said to be absent.[35] Nevertheless, since inquiry (*vitarka*) still characterizes these five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, they can still be said to have the first variety of conceptual thought in its intrinsic nature. By contrast, moments of mental perceptual consciousness associated with strong insight and mindfulness are characterized by all three varieties of conceptual thought.

Saṅghabhadra[36] offers a further explanation of the characterization, "without conceptual thought (*avikalpika*)" as it is applied to the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness. A given type of perceptual consciousness can be said to have conceptual thought under two conditions: 1) that a given type of perceptual consciousness can apprehend, within one moment, an object-field of more than a single category, or 2) that a series of many moments of the same type of perceptual consciousness can occur with regard to the same object-

support. The five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness fail to meet these two conditions: they apprehend only a present object-field of a single category, and a subsequent moment of the same type of perceptual consciousness cannot apprehend that same object-support. However, since mental perceptual consciousness is unrestricted with regard to both the category and time period of its object-field, it may apprehend an object-field of more than a single category in one moment, and several moments of mental perceptual consciousness can apprehend the same object-support. Therefore, Saṅghabhadra concludes that it can be said, in agreement with tradition, that only mental perceptual consciousness has conceptual thought.

Further, the scope of the object-field of mental perceptual consciousness is much broader than that of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness. Within the traditional classification of eighteen elements (*dhātu*), the object-field of the mental organ and mental perceptual consciousness is the *dharma* element, or all constituent factors (*dharma*) not included in any of the other five object-field categories. The ten externally directed sense organs and their corresponding types of perceptual consciousness are restricted to present object-fields of a single category. The mental organ and mental perceptual consciousness have no such restriction. Mental perceptual consciousness can apprehend all factors (*dharma*) belonging to any of the eighteen categories of elements. Therefore, the five external object-fields may be apprehended by both their own respective perceptual consciousness and mental perceptual consciousness. The other thirteen elements, that is, the six sense organs, the six types of perceptual consciousness, and the *dharma* element, which includes the three unconditioned factors (*asaṃskṛtadharma*), are apprehended only by mental perceptual consciousness.[37] Mental perceptual consciousness also can apprehend factors of any of the three time periods, past, present, or future.[38] Therefore, mental perceptual consciousness, being unrestricted in both the category and time period of its object-field, is said to be capable of apprehending all factors.[39]

In addition to these eighteen categories of constituent factors, which exist as real entities (*dravyasat*) in the three time periods, the scope of the object-field of mental perceptual consciousness includes composite entities (*ho-ho, sāmagrī, saṃghāta?*), whose existence is merely provisional (*prajñaptisat*).[40] Since these composites are apprehended only by conceptual thought through discrimination (*abhinirūpaṇavikalpa*), they are the object-field of mental perceptual consciousness alone.

III. The Dārṣṭāntika model of perception

The Dārṣṭāntikas also accept, as a provisional description, the Sarvāstivādin model of perception as involving a sense organ, object, and perceptual consciousness, but they differ from the Sarvāstivādins on the following points: 1) the process through which perception occurs; 2) the temporal relation among the provisionally designated sense organ, object, and perceptual consciousness; and 3) the nature of the object perceived.

On the first point of disagreement, concerning the process of perception, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* notes that according to the Dārṣṭāntika view, it is not the sense organ, but rather the collocation (*sāmagrī*) of the sense organ, and so on, that can be said to sense or perceive.[41] The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the *Nyāyānusāra* elaborate upon this Dārṣṭāntika model of perception.[42] Perception, like all experience, can be described only provisionally as consisting of individual factors possessing unique activities; actually, in the case of perception, as in all causal relations, there exists no distinct agent or cause possessing its own activity of producing a distinct effect.[43] Instead, there is simply a stream of experience, or more precisely, a stream of cause and effect (*hetuphalamātra*). These provisionally designated individual causes and effects can be said to have activity only in the sense that they constitute a conventionally existing collocation of factors.[44] In the experience of perception, words such as sense organ, object, or perceptual consciousness can be used only figuratively to refer to moments abstracted from the causal process as a whole; there is no single factor that perceives or others that are perceived.

In the ninth chapter of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Vasubandhu presents a model of the perceptual process which, though not attributed explicitly to the Dārṣṭāntikas, similarly refuses to allocate distinct activity to any of the components through which the process is described:[45]

> In that case, when it is said in the scripture that "perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*) is aware (*vijānāti*)," what does perceptual consciousness do? It does not do anything. Just as it is said that the effect conforms to the cause since it attains its existence (*ātmalābha*) through similarity (*sādṛśya*) [to its cause] even without doing anything, in this way also it is said that perceptual consciousness is aware since it attains its existence through similarity [to its object] even without doing anything. What is [this that is referred to as] its "similarity"? It is the fact that it has the aspect of that [object]. For this reason, even though that [perceptual consciousness] has arisen due to the sense organ, it is said to be aware of the object-field and not of the sense organ. Or, just as the series of perceptual consciousness is the cause with regard to a given [moment of] perceptual consciousness, so there is no fault in saying that perceptual consciousness is aware, since one can apply the word "agent" to the cause.

Thus, for Vasubandhu, perceptual consciousness should not be interpreted as a factor having unique activity: that is, as an awareness of a distinct object-field. The word awareness only refers to a causal series of moments of consciousness that arises with the particular aspect of what is referred to as its object. One can also provisionally describe perceptual consciousness as aware in the sense that it conditions the arising of subsequent moments of perceptual consciousness. Therefore, as in the Dārṣṭāntika model, Vasubandhu suggests that one cannot sharply distin-

guish the activity of the object from that of the perceptual consciousness that is said to apprehend it; instead, one must view perception as a causal process.

Saṅghabhadra's response to this Dārṣṭāntika model of perception is simple: even though all conditioned factors do indeed arise from a collocation of causes and conditions, each factor within the collocation has a distinct particular characteristic and activity.[46] Similarly, even though perception results from a collocation, the existence of its individual causes and conditions as real entities each having a distinct intrinsic nature and activity may be proved through scriptural references and argument.

On the second point of disagreement concerning the temporal relation among the provisionally designated components of perception, the Dārṣṭāntikas also reject the Sarvāstivādin claim that, in the case of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, a simultaneous temporal relation obtains among the sense organ, object-field, and perceptual consciousness. Their rejection is a consequence of their refusal to accept any type of simultaneous causal relation: the Dārṣṭāntikas claim that there is no possibility of a relation of producer and produced (*janyajanakabhāva*) between factors that are simultaneous (*sahotpanna*). If such simultaneous causal relations were possible, then the generative factor (*janakadharma*) would be without any generative capability, since the factor that it supposedly produces arises simultaneously with it. Therefore, the factor that is designated as the generative cause must exist at a time different from (*bhinnakāla*), that is, specifically prior to its effect. Consequently, the two provisional conditions for the arising of perceptual consciousness, the sense organ and the object, must exist prior to, not simultaneously with their effect.[47]

This refusal to accept the simultaneity of the sense organ, the object, and the perceptual consciousness results in a model of perception as a successive causal process. This model is attributed to the Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika master Śrīlāta.[48] The sense organ and the object-field in the first moment condition the arising of perceptual consciousness in the second moment. Then, with the assemblage (*saṃnipāta*) of the sense organ, object-field, and perceptual consciousness, the three thought concomitants—feelings (*vedanā*), concepts (*saṃjñā*), and volition (*cetanā*)—arise in the third and subsequent moments.

Both Saṅghabhadra and Vasubandhu criticize Śrīlāta's successive model of perception. In their view, it results in a multilevel structure of cognitive functioning, in which the various mental activities such as perceptual consciousness, feelings, and so on, that occur in the same moment have different object-supports. They claim that, according to Śrīlāta's model, an object-field and sense organ present in one moment "A" condition the arising of the corresponding perceptual consciousness of that particular object-field in the subsequent moment "B." For example, visible material form and the eye in one moment would condition the arising of visual perceptual consciousness of its particular object-field in the next moment. This assemblage (*saṃnipāta*) or collocation (*sāmagrī*) of these three over two moments[49] acts as a cause to produce feelings with regard to that original object-field in the third moment "C." However, in this second

moment "B" another object-field and sense organ, for example, sound and the ear, occur and condition the arising of auditory perceptual consciousness in the third moment "C." This auditory perceptual consciousness in this third moment "C" would have sound as its object-support, while the concurrent thought concomitant, feeling, would be supported by the prior visual object-field. In this way, moment after moment, perceptual consciousness and its associated thought concomitants would have different object-supports. This model then contradicts the Sarvāstivādin provision that perceptual consciousness, or thought, and its associated thought concomitants must share the same object-support.[50]

This first criticism of the Dārsṭāntika position is valid only if one accepts the Sarvāstivādin model of cognitive functioning through both thought (*citta*) and thought concomitants (*caitta*). Each moment of experience contains one factor of thought (*citta*), or perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*), in addition to at least ten thought concomitants (*caitta*), including feelings, concepts, volition, and so on. Since thought and thought concomitants exist as distinct real entities with different particular characteristics and activities, they can exist simultaneously and function independently with one restriction: those that occur within one moment must function having the same object-support. The Dārṣṭāntikas, however, assert that thought concomitants do not exist as entities distinct from thought or perceptual consciousness. They claim that the various mental functions performed by these supposed thought concomitants are actually functions of thought itself.[51] Therefore, each of the cognitive functions indicated by the so-called thought or thought concomitants occur only successively.[52] A particular object-field and sense organ in one moment "A" would give rise to perceptual consciousness in the subsequent moment, which would then produce, in succession, various mental functions with regard to that object-field. Thus, from the Dārṣṭāntika perspective, the Sarvāstivādin criticism that perceptual consciousness and its associated thought concomitants have different object-supports is unfounded.

Throughout the *Nyāyānusāra*, Saṅghabhadra raises a second criticism of this successive perceptual model, a criticism that reflects the controversy concerning the possibility of a nonexistent object of perceptual consciousness. If perception is successive, as the Dārṣṭāntikas claim, then even in the case of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, the object-field would be past when its corresponding perceptual consciousness arises.[53] The Dārṣṭāntikas must then explain why a given moment of perceptual consciousness takes as its support only the immediately preceding object-field, and not all past object-fields. If the Dārṣṭāntikas claim that a present moment of perceptual consciousness perceives only its own cause, that is, the immediately preceding moment, then they must explain why an object-field of the distant past is not also considered to be its cause. They might respond that the object-field of the immediately preceding moment is the cause because it alone has a connection (*saṃbandha*) with that present moment of perceptual consciousness. However, since the immediately preceding object-field, like that of the distant past, is, in

their opinion, equally nonexistent, how can they justify a special "connection" between consecutive moments? The Dārṣṭāntikas might defend this unique connection by replying that the object-field of the immediately preceding moment acts as a condition when that succeeding moment of perceptual consciousness is on the point of arising. In this case, Saṅghabhadra argues, the Dārṣṭāntikas controvert their initial claim that a present moment of perceptual consciousness perceives only past objects; for their reply entails that a future visual perceptual consciousness, that is, one that is about to arise, perceives a present object-field. Thus, the Dārṣṭāntika theory of a successive perceptual model requires some explanation for the unique character of the immediately preceding object-field, a character that distinguishes it from all other past objects and specifies it as the only possible object of present perceptual consciousness.

In his concluding criticism, Saṅghabhadra argues that the proponents of this successive perceptual model have made their position completely untenable by rejecting the existence of past and future factors.[54] When the sense organ and object-field exist, their corresponding perceptual consciousness has not yet arisen, and hence does not exist; when perceptual consciousness arises, the sense organ and object have already passed away, and hence no longer exist. Since no causal interaction can be established between a factor that exists and one that does not exist, the previous sense organ and object-field can have no causal effect upon perceptual consciousness. Thus, in Saṅghabhadra's opinion, this successive model of perception leads to the conclusion either that perception occurs without its two requisite conditions, thereby contradicting the scripture, or that perception is conditioned by nonexistents, which, from the Sarvāstivādin perspective, is absurd.[55] In either case, the Dārṣṭāntika position results in a denial of direct perception,[56] and an implicit admission that all perception depends upon a nonexistent object.

IV. The possibility of a nonexistent object of consciousness

The *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* is one of the first northern Indian Abhidharma texts that explicitly raises the issue of the possibility of a nonexistent object of knowledge or perceptual consciousness.[57] Regarding the possibility of knowledge that is without an existent object-field, the text offers two opinions: 1) such knowledge is not possible; or 2) particular knowledge of past and future factors can be said to have a nonexistent object-field. The existential status of past and future factors as objects of knowledge is also discussed in the first fascicle of the *Vijñānakāya*.[58] Here, the author argues for the existence of past and future factors against an opponent, Maudgalyāyana,[59] who allows the existence only of present and of unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) factors.[60] In defending his view, the author cites numerous scriptural passages that refer either to the causal activity of past factors, or to the perception and knowledge of both past and future factors. The author, in using these passages to support the existence of past and future factors, implicitly assumes that only existent factors can exert

causal efficacy, and that knowledge or perception arises only with an existent object-support. Maudgalyāyana replies that thought without an existent object-support is indeed possible: precisely, that thought which depends upon past and future factors.[61] If this is the case, the author responds, the definition of thought or perceptual consciousness given in the scripture must be rejected. Perceptual consciousness is defined as intentional awareness; that is, as that which is aware (*vijānāti*) of visible material form, sound, and so on up to mental factors (*dharma*). If the object-support were nonexistent, there would be no object of awareness and awareness itself would be impossible. Further, the scriptural passage stating that perceptual consciousness arises on the basis of two conditions, the sense organ and the object-support, would be contradicted. If a nonexistent object-support were allowed, these two conditions would not be present. Here the author again assumes that only existent factors can function as conditions.

The *Mahāvibhāṣā* further develops the arguments of the *Vijñānakāya*; it supports the position that perception and knowledge depend only upon an existent object-support,[62] and that only actually existing entities can function as conditions.[63] This opinion of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* is evident in an argument with the Dārṣṭāntikas and other schools concerning whether instances of knowledge (*jñāna*) or its objects are more numerous.[64] For the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, all knowledge depends upon an existent object. Further, knowledge itself can become an object for subsequent moments of knowledge. Therefore, the objects of knowledge are more numerous. However, the Dārṣṭāntikas apparently consider instances of knowledge more numerous, since they assert that knowledge can depend upon nonexistent object-fields, including illusions, sky-castles, circles made from whirling firebrands, and mirages.

These and other cases of nonexistent object-fields given by the Dārṣṭāntikas indicate that by the time of the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, the range of possible objects of knowledge or perceptual consciousness whose existence was disputed exceeded that of simply past and future factors. For example, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* cites the Dārṣṭāntikas as rejecting the existence of objects of mistaken cognition,[65] such as the snake that is cognized in place of the actual rope, or the human being in place of the pillar, or the self that is seen to exist within one's own body (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*). The Dārṣṭānikas also reject reflections and echoes,[66] dream images,[67] illusions (*māyā*) and magical creations (*nirmāṇa*),[68] negative expressions, such as impermanence,[69] and denials.[70] In the opinion of the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, such examples do not prove that knowledge or perceptual consciousness may depend upon a nonexistent object-support. Instead, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* concludes the converse: because such things act as supporting conditions in the production of perception, there must in each case be some existent object-field.

Among the post-Vibhāṣā northern Abhidharma texts, the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra, Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, Nyāyānusāra*, and *Abhidharmadīpa* all contain extensive discussions of the possibility of a nonexistent object of perceptual con-

sciousness. In these texts, as in the *Vijñānakāya*, the impetus for raising this issue is the controversy concerning the existence of past and future factors. Each text, regardless of its particular stance on this controversy, appeals to both scriptural references (*āgama*) and arguments (*yukti*) as reasons to support its position. The similarity between the reasons and examples employed by the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, *Nyāyānusāra*, and *Abhidharmadīpa*, which have documented historical connections, with those cited in the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* suggests a shared store of arguments and scriptural references on the topic, a common source, or intentional borrowing.

Among the reasons offered by these texts in support of the existence of past and future factors, particular importance is accorded to the fact that knowledge or perceptual consciousness depends only upon an existent object-support.[71] For example, in the *Tattvasiddhịśāstra*, out of the nineteen reasons for the existence of past and future factors presented by the opponent, seven require the existence of an object of perceptual consciousness. The following four are relevant here:[72] 1) since thought is produced only with regard to factors that exist; 2) since mental perceptual consciousness takes the immediately past moment of perceptual consciousness as its basis (*āśraya*) and may depend upon future factors as its object-support (*ālambana*), if past and future factors did not exist, mental perceptual consciousness would have no basis or support; 3) since ordinary mental perceptual consciousness cannot apprehend the five external object-fields when they are present, if past factors did not exist, recollection of those object-fields would be impossible; and 4) since thought and thought concomitants cannot know themselves, factors associated with them, or their co-present causes, these various factors can only be known when they are past by a subsequent moment of thought.[73]

The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*[74] offers four reasons in support of the existence of past and future factors, two of which concern perceptual consciousness and its object-support: 1) according to scripture, "there is the arising of perceptual consciousness in dependence upon two,"[75] that is, the sense organ and the object-support; and 2) according to argument, since perceptual consciousness operates only when there is an existent object-field, if past and future factors did not exist, perceptual consciousness of past and future factors would have a nonexistent object-support, and hence, would not arise.

The *Nyāyānusāra* and *Abhidharmadīpa*, even though patterned closely on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, display a striking similarity to the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* in their treatment of the existence of past and future factors. The *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* begins its discussion with the following observations.[76]

> There are people who claim that factors of the two time periods [of past and future] exist, and [others who claim that they] do not exist. [Question:] For what reasons are they said to exist; for what reasons are they said not to exist? [Response:] Those [who state that they] exist, [claim that] if a factor exists, thought is produced with regard to it. Since one

> is able to produce thought with regard to factors of the two time periods [of past and future], one should acknowledge that they exist. [Question:] You should first state the characteristic [i.e., definition] of existence. [Response:] That range (*gocara*) upon which knowledge operates is referred to as the characteristic of existence.

For Saṅghabhadra[77] also, establishing the existence of past and future factors first requires defining or stating the characteristic of existence (*sallakṣaṇa, sattvalakṣaṇa*). Once this defining characteristic of existence is understood, he claims, the existence of past and future factors will be universally accepted. Some teachers, he notes, define the characteristic of existence as that which has already been produced and has not yet passed away. For Saṅghabhadra, this is simply to identify existence with the present, and thereby to assume, a priori, that past and future factors do not exist. Instead, Saṅghabhadra offers the following definition that will include factors of all three time periods:[78] "To be an object-field that produces cognition (*buddhi*) is the true characteristic of existence." Similarly, the *Abhidharmadīpa*,[79] defines the characteristic of existence (*sattvalakṣaṇa*) as "that of which the indicative mark (*cihna*) is considered by cognition," and explains it as follows:[80]

> An objective thing, whose own form is established by intrinsic nature, is said to exist as a real entity when one observes its defining characteristic determined by an observation of factors, which is free from mistaken aspects.

Thus, the *Nyāyānusāra* and the *Abhidharmadīpa*, like the opponent in the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, define existence as that which serves as the object of cognition.

These texts, however, admit several categories of existence, and hence, several categories of possible objects of cognition. Saṅghabhadra[81] first broadly distinguishes between existence as a real entity (*dravyasat*), equated with absolute existence (*paramārthasat*), and existence as a provisional entity (*prajñaptisat*), equated with conventional existence (*saṃvṛtisat*). Saṅghabhadra subsumes within these two categories of existence a third category of relative existence (*apekṣā*) recognized by some teachers, including the author of the *Abhidharmadīpa*.[82]

The first category of real entities includes factors such as visible material form or feeling, which produce cognition without depending upon anything else. These real entities exist in several modes (*bhāva*): specifically, present existence as intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) together with distinctive activity (*kāritra*), and past or future existence as intrinsic nature alone. Since this intrinsic nature, whether past, present, or future, can serve as the object-support for knowledge, past and future factors also can be said to exist.[83]

The second category of provisional entities, such as a pot or an army, pro-

duces cognition only in dependence upon a real entity. This dependence is twofold: 1) direct dependence upon real entities, as in the case of a pot, which depends upon the fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*) of which it is made; and 2) dependence first upon other provisional entities, and secondarily upon a real entity, as in the case of an army, which depends first upon its human members, and finally upon the ultimate factors of which humans are composed.

This Sarvāstivādin definition of existence in terms of objects that give rise to cognition has significant implications for the dispute concerning the possibility of a nonexistent object-support of perceptual consciousness. Since an entity's status as an object-support condition for the arising of perceptual consciousness is the very criterion by which the existence of that entity is established, no such object-support can, by definition, be nonexistent. However, it is important to note that the object perceived may exist in different ways. As the *Mahāvibhāṣā* makes clear, all conditions must actually exist as real entities, and the object-support, as one such condition, must also so exist. Nevertheless, provisionally designated entities may also become the objective content of mental perceptual consciousness. Does this then imply that the object-support condition may exist only provisionally? The answer lies in the definition of provisional existence: all provisional entities depend primarily or secondarily upon a real entity. Thus provisional entities, exclusive of their actually existing bases, cannot serve as the object-support condition for the arising of perceptual consciousness. Instead, the real entity upon which provisional entities depend serves as the object-support.[84]

V. Objects whose existence is disputed

Since the Dārṣṭāntikas deny that conditions must exist as real entities, they reject this Sarvāstivādin definition of existence and consider their use of it to prove the existence of past and future factors groundless. This Dārṣṭāntika objection is presented in the *Nyāyānusāra*:[85] "This [definition] also does not yet constitute the true characteristic of actual existence because [we] allow that nonexistent [objects] also are able to serve as object-fields that produce cognition." The *Mahāvibhāṣā, Tattvasiddhiśāstra, Nyāyānusāra*, and *Abhidharmadīpa* all provide examples of objects of cognition claimed to be nonexistent:[86] 1) products of sensory error, such as two moons, and products of mistaken cognition, such as a circle made from a whirling firebrand, a pillar mistaken for a human being, or the concept of self; 2) objects perceived in a certain meditative states; 3) dream images; 4) reflected images, echoes, illusions, and magical creations; 5) expressions having a nonexistent object including: a) certain negations, such as nonexistence, or the prior nonexistence of sound, b) affirmative expressions referring to unattested and putatively impossible objects, such as the horn of a hare, and c) logically contradictory objects such as the thirteenth sense sphere (*āyatana*), or the son of a barren woman; 6) past and future objects either cognized through inferential memory and anticipation, respectively, or perceived directly.

The Sarvāstivādins respond to these examples by indicating, in each case, the existent object-field that supports perception, and hence, cognition.

1. Sensory error and mistaken cognition

Sensory error,[87] such as the visual distortions produced by ophthalmic disorders, or the image of two moons, results from faulty sense organs and does not imply a nonexistent object-field. For example, a visual sense organ afflicted by ophthalmic disorders does grasp existent visual material form, albeit unclearly. This then results in mistaken cognition with regard to that existent object-field. In the case of the image of two moons, Saṅghabhadra explains that the visual sense organ and that initial moment of visual perceptual consciousness depend upon or see the single existent moon. However, the clarity of perception is influenced by the sense organ, which is a condition co-equal with the object-field in the arising of perceptual consciousness. Therefore, the deteriorated state of the visual sense organ produces an unclear visual perceptual consciousness, which results in the confused cognition of two moons. Nevertheless, the object-field, the single moon, actually exists. This is evident because no such cognition of the moon, confused or otherwise, arises where the moon is not found.

Instances of mistaken cognition[88] also do not arise without an existent object-field. The circular form in which a whirling firebrand appears, or the human form in which a pillar appears do not, in themselves, exist as real entities (*dravya*). However, the cognition that apprehends them does have an existent object-field: the individual points of light comprising the apparent circle, or the form of the pillar. Similarly, regarding the view that the self exists in one's own body (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*),[89] the existent object-field is the five appropriating aggregates (*upādānaskandha*), which are then mistakenly cognized as self (*ātman*), and as what belongs to self (*ātmīya*).

The Sarvāstivādin explanation of these instances of sensory error and mistaken cognition assumes that cognition may be either correct, that is consistent with the object-field, or mistaken, that is deviating from the true character of the object-field due to certain intervening conditions. However, whether correct or mistaken, cognition only arises if supported by an existent object-field. The status of cognition as correct or mistaken is determined by whether or not that cognition apprehends the object-field through a correct or a mistaken aspect (*ākāra*). For example, the conditioning influence of a visual sense organ afflicted with an ophthalmic disorder causes the visual object-field to be grasped unclearly, and produces cognition (*buddhi*) characterized by a mistaken aspect (*viparītākāra*). Similarly, cognition of a whirling firebrand has the mistaken aspect of circularity, and cognition of the five appropriating aggregates has the mistaken aspect of self and what belongs to self.[90] However, in none of these cases does the object-field itself, in its true nature, possess these mistaken aspects, nor is it nonexistent.[91] Instead, error resides in the aspect of cognition through which the object-field is apprehended.

In this Sarvāstivādin account of mistaken cognition, the term, aspect (*ākāra*), is used in a restricted sense as identical to insight (*prajñākāra*), and not in the general sense in which all thought and thought concomitants may be said to have an aspect (*sākāra*). Thought and thought concomitants are said to "have an aspect" only in the general sense that the object-support is apprehended through their own activity.[92] Aspect in the restricted sense is identified with insight because it represents the discrimination of the characteristics of the object-field in a particular way as carried out by insight.[95] Insight characterized by a mistaken aspect may be the result of faulty sense organs, defilements, ignorance, or past action. However, this mistaken aspect is not associated with the initial moment of externally directed perceptual consciousness in which insight, though present, is not acute. Instead, it occurs only in the subsequent moment of mental perceptual consciousness in which there is discriminative conceptual thought (*abhinirūpaṇavikalpa*), or discrimination of the characteristics of the object-field.[94]

2. Meditative objects

The Sarvāstivādins explain objects perceived in certain meditative states also as resulting from the application of a specific aspect (*ākāra*) to an existent object-support. The meditative objects in question are those perceived in such states as mindfulness with regard to breathing (*ānāpānasmṛti*), meditation on the repulsive (*aśubhā*), the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), the eight spheres of mastery (*abhibhvāyatana*), and the ten spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*).[95] All of these states occur as a result of attention through resolution (*adhimuktimanaskāra*),[96] by which practitioners intentionally perceive the object in a certain way, or with certain aspects, in accord with their resolve. For example, in the sphere of totality with regard to the color blue (*nīlakṛtsnāyatana*), perceptual consciousness is concentrated on the color blue, and perceives everything, everywhere, exclusively and totally as blue.[97] These aspects (*ākāra*) of totality and exclusiveness are the product of the practitioner's attention through resolution: that is to say, attention is directed in accordance with the practitioner's intention to perceive the object-field, "blue," as total and exclusive. For the Dārṣṭāntikas,[98] this perceived blueness does not actually exist because it results simply from the meditator's resolution. The Sarvāstivādins, however, as in the case of mistaken cognition, distinguish the aspects that characterize cognition from the object-field that supports it. The practitioner produces cognition with the aspects, totality and exclusiveness, through the power of his own resolution, but this cognition is supported by an existent object-support, a small patch of blue color.[99]

3. Dream images

The Dārṣṭāntikas claim that dream images are nonexistent because the dreamer discovers when awakened that events experienced in a dream did not actually

occur. For example, one eats and satisfies the senses when asleep and nevertheless wakes up hungry and weak.[100] The *Mahāvibhāṣā* defines dreaming[101] as the simple operation of thought and thought concomitants with regard to an object-support during sleep. Since the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness do not arise in a dream, these object-supports, whether external material form, or internal mental factors (*dharma*), are apprehended only by mental perceptual consciousness.[102] For Saṅghabhadra, dreaming is the recollection of past object-fields that have already been experienced,[103] but this recollection is influenced by the mind's sluggishness during sleep. For example, in the case of dream images that have never been experienced as such, like the horn of a hare, the dreamer combines in one place separate waking memories of a horn and a hare. However, the object-support for the dream image is not nonexistent; it is precisely those past factors that support the various parts of the recollection separately.

The dream images themselves result from several causes, which the *Mahāvibhāṣā*[104] summarizes as follows: 1) they are stimulated by other beings, for example, sages, spirits, gods, and so on; 2) they result from previous experiences, or habitual activity; 3) they presage a future event, that is to say, the dreamer first perceives the indicative mark of an auspicious or inauspicious future event in a dream;[105] 4) they result from conceptual thought, specifically, discriminative consideration that occurs in the waking state when one is about to fall asleep; 5) they result from illness, that is to say, due to a conflict or imbalance among the fundamental material elements (*dhātu, mahābhūta*), the dreamer sees a dream image that conforms to the predominant element.[106]

4. Reflected images, echoes, illusions and magical creations

For the Dārṣṭāntikas, reflected images, echoes, illusions and magical creations, like the objects of sensory error or mistaken cognition, meditative objects, or dream images, do not exist as perceived and have no existent support. For the Sarvāstivādins, however, reflected images, and so on, are themselves varieties of existent material form. As the *Mahāvibhāṣā*[107] explains, the Dārṣṭāntikas claim that reflected images do not actually exist because the object reflected does not itself enter the reflecting surface. Similarly, echoes do not actually exist because all sound is momentary, and one moment of sound cannot travel to produce a distant echo. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* responds that these reflected images and echoes do indeed exist because they act as conditions supporting the arising of perceptual consciousness, and because they are grasped by the sense organs and, hence, can be included within the twelve sense spheres (*āyatana*), which the Buddha declared to exist. Even though the reflected image and echo are not themselves the original visual material form or sound, they still consist of material form derived from the original object. Indeed, material form can result from a variety of causes and conditions: for example, liquid may be produced from moonlight on a moonstone (*candrakānta*), heat from cow dung or from sunlight on a sun-crystal (*sūryakānta*), and sound from hitting together the lips, teeth,

tongue, and so on. These varieties of liquid, heat, and sound, though perhaps not produced in the conventional way, can be said to exist precisely because they exert the activity of liquid, heat, or sound. Similarly, the material form of which a reflected image or echo is composed actually exists because it has the function of producing cognition.

Saṅghabhadra[108] also argues at length for the actual existence of reflected images and echoes as varieties of material form. The reflected image as such, like all composite entities, exists provisionally, but also like all provisionally existing entities, it has an actually existing basis. In the case of reflected images and echoes, this basis is the fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*) and derivative material form (*bhautika*). Subtle varieties of the fundamental elements, which are generated by the original object, reach the reflecting surface to produce the material reflected image.[109]

In Saṅghabhadra's argument for the existence of reflected images, several points are raised that indicate the criteria by which the Sarvāstivādins establish an entity's existence. First, Saṅghabhadra[110] notes that his opponents allow only certain nonexistent objects, such as reflected images, to be apprehended by perceptual consciousness. However, since no distinctions can be drawn among nonexistents, they should admit that all nonexistent objects are apprehended. Further, distinctions in the apprehension of an object as correct or incorrect, which result from the clarity of the sense organ, the distance of the object, and so on, are only possible with regard to an existent entity. Second, Saṅghabhadra criticizes Vasubandu's[111] assertion that the reflected image in no way exists, but is simply a particular efficacy of a collocation of conditions such that one sees the reflection. Saṅghabhadra asserts that a collocation (*sāmagrī*) does not exist as a real entity (*dravya*), and therefore cannot be said to have its own particular efficacy. Further, he demands why Vasubandhu will not allow this collocation of conditions, that is, the original object and the reflecting surface, to produce a separately existing reflected image. It is the nature of all separately existing conditioned factors to arise from a given collocation of conditions; similarly, a reflected image that arises from such a collocation should be allowed to exist as a separate entity. Third, Saṅghabhadra[112] offers several reasons in support of the existence of the reflected image: 1) most importantly, a reflected image satisfies the criterion for existence, that is, it serves as the object-support condition for the arising of perceptual consciousness; 2) like all actually existing conditioned factors, a reflected image is apprehended only when that reflection is present, and the presence of the reflection is dependent upon the collocation of its requisite conditions; 3) the reflected image is the object-support of visual perceptual consciousness, which, as an externally directed type of perceptual consciousness, is without conceptual thought, and therefore, must be supported by an actually existing object-field; 4) like all material form, a reflected image is able to obstruct the arising of other material form (i.e., another reflected image) in the same place; and 5) a reflected image, like all existent factors, is produced from various separately existing conditions.

The Sarvāstivādins further argue that illusions (*māyā*) and magical creations (*nirmāṇa*), like reflected images and echoes, are varieties of existent material form. Magical creations consist of material form emanated by magically creative thought (*nirmāṇacitta*), which itself results from supernormal power (*abhijñā*) developed in trance (*dhyāna*).[113] Similarly, in the case of illusions (*māyā*),[114] the source of the illusion exists as actual material form and results from techniques in illusion.

5. *Negations and expressions referring to a nonexistent object*

Of all the examples raised by the Dārṣṭāntikas to prove the possibility of a nonexistent object-support of perceptual consciousness, negations and expressions having a nonexistent object-referent receive the greatest attention from both Saṅghabhadra and the *Abhidharmadīpa*.[115] Saṅghabhadra focuses his extensive treatment of the topic on an examination of the nature and force of negating expressions. First, he cites a Dārṣṭāntika objection that the scriptural passage,[116] "one knows nonexistence (*asat*) as nonexistent," indicates that knowledge may depend upon a nonexistent object-field. Saṅghabhadra responds:[117]

> What does this cognition take as its object-support? It is produced supported by a specification (*abhidhāna*)[118] that negates existence; it does not take nonexistence as the object-field by which it is supported. That is to say, the specifying expression that negates existence is precisely a particular specification that asserts nonexistence. As a result, when cognition is produced with regard to the expression specifying nonexistence, it forms the understanding of nonexistence. Therefore, this cognition is not produced supported by nonexistence. [Objection:] Isn't this specification that asserts nonexistence [itself] existent; how can cognition deny it as nonexistent? [Response:] Cognition is not produced denying the expression itself; it is only able to cognize [the object] specified by that [specification] as nonexistent. That is to say, cognition is produced supported by an object-field that negates existence, but it is not produced taking nonexistence as its object-field. [Objection:] What is this object-field that is able to negate existence? [Response:] It is the specification (*abhidhāna*) that has arisen with regard to nonexistence. Since this cognition is supported by the specification as its object-field, reason demands that one should not claim that this [cognition] is produced supported by a nonexistent object-field.

For Saṅghabhadra, these negating expressions are of two types:[119] 1) those that have an existent specified object (*abhidheya*), as in the case of expressions such as non-brahman (*abrāhmaṇa*), or impermanence (*anitya*); and 2) those whose specified object does not exist, as in the case of expressions such as nonexistence (*asat*), or absence (*abhāva*). In the first case, the expressions non-

brahman and impermanence implicitly refer to an existent object: a *kṣatriya* and conditioned factors, respectively. The specifying expressions, non-brahman or impermanence, negate the particular quality, brahman or permanence, within the existent specified object. This first type of negating expression produces knowledge in two stages: knowledge first depends upon the specification, non-brahman or impermanence, and cognizes that the negated quality does not exist. Next, it depends upon the specified object, the *kṣatriya* or conditioned factors, and cognizes that the negated quality does not exist within the specified object. In the second case, the expressions nonexistence, absence, and so on, do not refer implicitly to an existent specified object. The resulting knowledge produced by these expressions depends only upon the specification itself; it is aware of the nonexistence of that which is negated in that particular context.[120]

For Saṅghabhadra, the existence of a specification (*abhidhāna*) does not demand the corresponding existence of a specified object (*abhidheya*).[121] As in this second type of negation, the specifying expression, "nonexistence," itself exists and can serve as the object-support for the arising of cognition. However, the specification does not correspond to an existent specified object; that is to say, there exists no specified object, "nonexistence," to which the specifying expression, "nonexistence," refers. If all specifying expressions required existent specified objects, then such expressions as the horn of a hare, the thirteenth sense sphere, and the son of a barren woman would also be required to have an existent specified object.[122] Such specifying expressions arise in accordance with one's own intentions as a result of both immediately preceding thought concomitants, namely, volition (*cetanā*), and simultaneous thought concomitants. The former acts as the causal arouser (*hetusamutthāna*), and the latter act as arousers in that moment (*tatkṣaṇasamutthāna*).[123] Since the immediate causes of the specifying expression are these prior and simultaneous arousing thought concomitants, and not the specified object itself, the object specified by a given expression need not exist. Although a specifying expression can indicate a nonexistent specified object, this does not justify the conclusion that, in a similar fashion, cognition can be supported by a nonexistent object-field. Unlike the relation between the specified object and the specifying expression, the object-field acts as a condition for the arising of cognition, and as such, must exist.

In this explanation, Saṅghabhadra implicitly responds to an objection that nonexistent object-fields must themselves serve as the support for perceptual consciousness because they serve as the object-referent in speech. As the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* claims,[124] "there should be perceptual consciousness that depends upon the horn of a hare, and so on. If there were not, how would one be able to speak of them?" According to Saṅghabhadra's explanation, one can indeed speak of such nonexistent objects, but the specifying expression does not depend upon a nonexistent specified object, but rather upon preceding and simultaneous thought concomitants. Similarly, the cognition of this nonexistent object depends only upon the existent specifying expression, and not upon any nonexistent specified object.

The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Abhidharmadīpa* next raise the case of the denial of putatively impossible or logically contradictory objects, as in statements such as "there is no thirteenth sense sphere," or "there is no son of a barren woman." Such denials are to be explained in a way similar to Saṅghabhadra's analysis of the second type of negation, illustrated by expressions such as "nonexistence," or "absence." Just as in the affirmative statement, "thirteenth sense sphere" (*trayodaśāyatana*), so in its denial, "there is no thirteenth sense sphere," the object-field for the arising of one's cognition of the expression is not a nonexistent object, "no thirteenth sense sphere," but rather is simply the speech event itself (*vāgvastumātra*).[125]

The *Abhidharmadīpa*,[126] explains in more detail the process by which negation occurs, and the object-support that conditions the arising of the cognition of a particular negation. A denial cannot negate either an existent (*sat*) or nonexistent (*asat*) in and of itself. If this were possible, a king's enemies would become nonexistent simply as a result of declaring them to be so, and a nonexistent should, through double negation, become existent. Using the example of negating the horn of a hare, the *Abhidharmadīpa* concludes:[127]

> Neither the horn of a bull, nor the horn of a hare is negated through that negative particle. How is it then? In dependence upon the cognition of a relation between the hare and the element of space, cognitions of a lack of relation between real entities such as [that relation between] a bull and a horn, and so on, are indicated [in case of the hare and the horn].

Therefore, in denying the horn of a hare, one does not negate either an existent (i.e., the horn of a bull), or a nonexistent (i.e., the horn of a hare). Instead, one merely denies the relation between a bull and its horn perceived previously as it pertains to a hare's head, in which only a relation with space is perceived.

The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* raises one final example of a negative expression: "there is the prior nonexistence of sound." Saṅghabhadra[128] explains our cognition of this expression in accordance with his treatment of the first type of negation. He refers to a prior disagreement with Vasubandhu concerning the meaning of the phrase, "there is the prior nonexistence of sound; there is the subsequent nonexistence [of sound]" (*astiśabdasya prāg abhāvo 'sti paścād abhāva ity ucyate*).[129] Saṅghabhadra inquires whether the phrase, "there is the nonexistence," is used with regard to an absolutely nonexistent object, or with regard to an existent object in which something else is negated. Only the second option, Saṅgabhadra claims, is possible. In that case, the phrase, "there is the prior nonexistence of sound," indicates that there is no sound within another existent entity. The cognition of this prior nonexistence of sound then depends upon that other existent entity in which sound is not found. Specifically, it is the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*), or the assisting circumstances in which sound has not yet arisen that serves as the object-support for the cognition of the phase, "there is the prior nonexistence of sound." Thus, cognition of the prior nonexistence of

sound does indeed have an existent object-support, that is, the substratum or assisting circumstances that lack sound.

Saṅghabhadra[130] also defends the explanation attributed to the Vaibhāṣikas in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*,[131] that the perceptual consciousness of the prior nonexistence of sound depends upon the future sound itself. For the Sarvāstivādins, this future sound does exist, and therefore may serve as the object-support for the arising of a cognition. It does not, however, exist in the same way as the present. A present factor exists characterized by both intrinsic nature and activity, whereas past and future factors exist only as intrinsic nature. Therefore, even though this future sound exists as intrinsic nature, it is not heard because, as future, it does not exert its activity. This future sound may be cognized due to its existence as intrinsic nature, but insofar as it lacks activity, it is cognized as nonexistent.[132]

6. *Cognition of past and future factors*

For the Dārṣṭāntikas, the most common experience of perceptual consciousness without an existent object-field is that of memory of the past, and anticipation of the future. The Dārṣṭāntikas claim that in these cases, the object-field does not exist precisely because the past factors recollected and future factors anticipated do not actually exist. Nevertheless, no one would deny that recollection or anticipation is possible. Therefore, the Dārṣṭāntikas conclude one must admit that thought and thought concomitants can arise with a nonexistent object-support.

For the Sarvāstivādins, however, the mental perceptual consciousness of past or future factors, like the perceptual consciousness of present factors, must be supported by an existent object-field. The *Mahāvibhāṣā*[133] explains recollection as follows: "through the power of habitual practice, sentient beings obtain knowledge homogeneous with a certain factor, which enables them to cognize [that factor when past] in the same way in which it was previously experienced." Vasumitra further suggests three causes that make recollection possible:[134] 1) securely grasping the characteristic of the object previously experienced; 2) the present occurrence of a series homogeneous with that previous experience; and 3) not losing mindfulness. Therefore, once one apprehends and duly notes an object, one can recollect it at a later time when homogeneous knowledge, or knowledge similar to that previously experienced knowledge is stimulated by practice, by a similar object-support, or by circumstances conducive to recollection. This recollection then takes the original object, now past, as its object-support.

The thought concomitant, mindfulness (*smṛti*), which occurs associated with all moments of thought, plays an instrumental role in this process of recollection. Whereas the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*[135] defines mindfulness simply as the non-loss (*asaṃpramoṣa*) of the object-support, Saṅghabhadra defines mindfulness as the cause of the notation (*abhilapana*) and non-loss (*asaṃpramoṣa*) of the object-support.[136] The reason for Saṅghabhadra's inclusion of notation in the

definition of mindfulness becomes clear in a subsequent argument with the Dārṣṭāntika master Śrīlāta concerning the existence of mindfulness as a separate thought concomitant occurring in each moment of thought.[137] Saṅghabhadra asserts that notation occurs in each moment of perceptual consciousness whenever thought is aware of an object-field.[138] Therefore, the thought concomitant, mindfulness, functions with regard to present as well as past factors. Indeed, as Saṅghabhadra suggests, if there were no present mindfulness in the sense of noting the object-field, the recollection of previously experienced objects would be impossible. Mindfulness as the noting of present factors becomes the cause of their non-loss; this notation, in turn, enables the arising of subsequent recollection, which takes that past object as its object-support.[139]

The *Mahāvibhāṣā*[140] uses several models to explain knowledge of future factors. First, one can infer a future event on the basis of the past and present. That is to say, one observes the causal relation between past and present factors and infers that a given present factor will produce a certain future factor. Or, one anticipates a future effect on the basis of one's observation of a certain present characteristic or indicative mark (*phalacihna*), which exists in the psychophysical series as a conditioned factor dissociated from thought (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*).[141] Finally, future (or past) factors may be perceived directly as in the case of certain special types of knowledge, such as knowledge resulting from one's vow (*praṇidhijñāna*).[142] As Saṅghabhadra[143] explains, there are two types of cognition of the past and future. The first, impure worldly cognition, can only recollect objects that have already been experienced. Since the future has not yet been experienced, worldly cognition can anticipate it only dimly. The second, pure cognition, observes with perfect clarity past and future objects that have never been experienced. In all these cases, however, the direct perception and resulting cognition of past and future factors demands an existent object-support.

VI. Conclusion

The Sarvāstivādins counter all such examples of seemingly nonexistent objects of cognition by finding, in each case, some existent to serve as the object-support. To summarize their argument, all perceptual consciousness or knowledge arises only in dependence upon an object-support, and this object-support, as a condition for the arising of that perceptual consciousness or knowledge, must actually exist. Since the cognition of such things as illusions, dream images, past and future factors, and so on, does occur, it also must have some existent object-support as its condition. The Sarvāstivādin explanation of these cases further implies that the object-support need not exist exactly in the manner in which it is cognized; hence, there may be a disparity between the content of cognition and the character of the object-field in itself.

Two principles are central to this Sarvāstivādin position: 1) conditions or causes must actually exist, and therefore, the object-support condition (*ālam-*

banapratyaya), as one of two conditions required for the arising of perceptual consciousness, must actually, in some manner, exist; and 2) the object-field may exist in a way other than that in which it is cognized, and therefore, cognition or insight may apprehend the object-support with an aspect (*ākāra*) that is not found in the object-field itself. The Dārṣṭāntikas, however, dispute both these points. The *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, Vasubandhu, and Śrīlāta clearly suggest that 1) even though the object-support may, in some sense, be considered a condition, it is not the generative cause for the arising of perceptual consciousness, and 2) the object-support is the actual content of cognition.

Concerning the first point of disagreement, the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*[144] asserts that precisely because there is knowledge without an object-support, perceptual consciousness is not, in every case, produced by two causes and conditions. Vasubandhu[145] takes a more conservative position: while still admitting two conditions for the arising of perceptual consciousness as prescribed in the scripture, he reinterprets the function of the object-support condition. He distinguishes the object-support condition (*ālambanapratyaya*) from generative conditions (*janakapratyaya*), and claims that the object, though an object-support condition, cannot be considered a generative condition. For example, in the case of mental perceptual consciousness (*manovijñāna*), the generative cause is that prior moment of mind (*manas*) within the same mental series. The object of mental perceptual consciousness (*dharma*) is not a generative cause, but rather a mere object-support. Vasubandhu notes that if the object-support condition were also the generative cause, the unconditioned factor, *nirvāṇa*, which cannot function as a generative cause, could not become the object-support of perceptual consciousness.[146] Since the object-support is not the generative cause, it need not exist. Therefore, Vasubandhu concludes that such nonexistent objects as past and future factors can still be considered the object-support of perceptual consciousness.

The Dārṣṭāntika master, Śrīlāta, presents a similar view:[147]

> Mental perceptual consciousness that depends upon past factors, and so on, is not without an object-support, [but] it does not depend only upon an existent [object-support]. For what reason is that so? [It is so because] mental perceptual consciousness that is produced taking the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness as its immediate contiguous condition (*samanantarapratyaya*) is able to experience the object-field apprehended by the prior [moment] of mind. Such mental perceptual consciousness takes this [previous moment of mind] as its cause; its object-support condition is the object of [that previous moment of] the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness. [This previous moment of mind can be said to be its cause because] this [mental perceptual consciousness] is able to be produced only when preceded by that [moment of mind], and therefore "this [mental perceptual consciousness] exists or does not exist in

> accordance with whether that [moment of mind] exists or does not exist."[148] However, this mental perceptual consciousness does not depend only on an existent [object-support] because at the time [of its arising] that object-field has already passed away. It is not without an object-support because this mental perceptual consciousness exists or does not exist in accordance with whether that [object-field] exists or does not exist. Further, when one recollects an object-field long past, [the recollection] is produced in the present time taking the prior [moment of] perceptual consciousness of that object as its condition because this recollection falls into the same series [as the prior moment of perceptual consciousness] and is produced through a mediated sequence. Even though there are other conditions that give rise to recollecting perceptual consciousness, it is produced only in dependence upon that previous object.

Thus for Śrīlāta, a given moment of mental perceptual consciousness takes as its object-support that object apprehended by the previous moment of perceptual consciousness. Though this previous object has passed away and hence, in Śrīlāta's opinion, is nonexistent, it can still be designated the object-support condition because it satisfies the traditional formula defining a conditioning relation: "when this exists, that exists," and so on. It is important to note that Śrīlāta interprets this formula as indicating a relation among successive conditions; he claims that a condition cannot be simultaneous with its effect, but rather must precede it. In this case, the existence or nonexistence of present perceptual consciousness depends upon the prior existence or nonexistence of this object-field. However, the generative cause of a present moment of perceptual consciousness is a previous moment of perceptual consciousness within its own series, and not the nonexistent object-support.

In another passage,[149] Śrīlāta clarifies the process by which present mental perceptual consciousness apprehends nonexistent past and future objects. Past and future objects are known through a mediated process of successive causation; that is to say, one infers the nature of past or future objects after having apprehended the present. As Śrīlāta states:[150]

> One is able to infer that a given present effect is produced from a certain type of past cause, and this [past] cause in turn arises from a certain cause, and so on, into the distance past in a way appropriate to each case, [and thus] one attains [past objects] through inference just as one would present [objects].

This inferential knowledge of various past objects is produced from causes that are found within the series of knowledge or perceptual consciousness itself. Previous knowledge of a particular type functions in a mediated causal process to produce present knowledge, and this present knowledge can be said to take the

object-field of this particular previous knowledge as its own object-support. Thus, the cause of present recollecting knowledge is a previous moment of knowledge within its own series, and not the content of the present recollection. However, because the past object serves as the object-support for the previous knowledge, it can, by extension, be considered the object-support also of the present recollection, even though it no longer exists. Śrīlāta explains knowledge of past objects not yet experienced and future objects in the same way: one applies a process of inference based on the knowledge of causes and effects that one has already experienced.

Saṅghabhadra[151] rejects Vasubandhu's distinction between the generative cause and the object-support condition, and his identification of the generative cause as a prior moment within the series of perceptual consciousness. In Saṅghabhadra's opinion, the scriptural passage stating that perceptual consciousness is produced in dependence upon two conditions, clearly indicates that the basis (*āśraya*), and the object-support (*ālambana*) are equally generative causes in the production of perceptual consciousness. Since the object-support acts as a generative cause in the production of perceptual consciousness, it must actually exist.

In his criticism of Śrīlāta's model of the arising of mental perceptual consciousness in dependence upon past nonexistent object-supports, Saṅghabhadra focuses upon three major points.[152] First, since Śrīlāta does not admit that the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness and the object-support they apprehend are simultaneous, even these five types of perceptual consciousness arise only when their object-field has passed away. The following moment of mental perceptual consciousness would then be two moments removed from its object-field. Therefore, before Śrīlāta discusses the knowledge of past and future factors by mental perceptual consciousness, he must first explain how it is possible for the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness to perceive a past nonexistent object-field. Second, Śrīlāta states that mental perceptual consciousness is not without an object-support. This, Saṅghabhadra claims, is tantamount to an admission of the existence of that object-support in some form. Śrīlāta's position would then be equivalent to that of the Sarvāstivādins: a past factor, though lacking activity, is not absolutely nonexistent like a sky flower, and yet it does not exist like the present, which is characterized by both activity and intrinsic nature. Third, Śrīlāta cannot meaningfully appeal to the traditional formula defining conditioning relations, "when this exists, that exists," and so on, or to a model of mediated successive causation because he does not allow the existence of past or future factors. According to Śrīlāta's model, when the object-support exists, the perceptual consciousness that apprehends it has not yet arisen, and when that perceptual consciousness arises, its object-support has already passed away. Similarly, in the case of mediated successive causation within the series of perceptual consciousness, the prior causal moment of perceptual consciousness no longer exists when its subsequent effect arises. By maintaining a causal relation between these successive moments, Śrīlāta is, in effect, admitting that there can be a causal relation of dependence

between existents and nonexistents, which neither Śrīlāta nor Saṅghabhadra would accept.[153] Thus, Saṅghabhadra concludes that object-support conditions act as generative causes coequal with the basis (*āśraya*) in the production of cognition, and must, therefore, in some sense, exist.

The second major point of disagreement between the Sarvāstivādins and the Dārṣṭāntikas concerns the relation between the content of cognition and the object-support. In all of the examples of seemingly nonexistent objects of cognition cited previously, the Dārṣṭāntikas assume that the object-support is the object as cognized, or the content of cognition. For example, in the case of the cognition of two moons, the object-support is precisely the two moons; in the case of meditation on the spheres of totality, the object-support of one's cognition of total and exclusive blueness is the total expanse of blue. This Dārṣṭāntika assumption that the object-support is the content of cognition leads inevitably to their conclusion that the object-support does not exist because in these cases this content of cognition has no actually existing counterpart. The Sarvāstivādins, however, assume that one's cognition in mental perceptual consciousness may diverge from the actual character of the existent object-field that serves as its support. In the case of the cognition of two moons, one's cognition is supported by the single existent moon, and so on.

This difference in assumptions becomes apparent in the discussion of deliberative reflection (*vimarśa*) on the nature or characteristics of a perceived object. As Vasubandhu states:[154] "When all cognition has an existent object-support, how would there be deliberative reflection with regard to that [object-support]?" He assumes that since the object-support is the very content of cognition, if all such object-supports exist, no cognition may be questioned or judged mistaken. In other words, deliberative reflection and doubt are possible only so long as nonexistent objects are allowed; mistaken cognition would then be cognition based on such a nonexistent object-support.

For Saṅghabhadra, such deliberative reflection or doubt is only possible with regard to an existent object. The possibility of investigating whether one's cognition of a particular object is accurate or mistaken (*viparīta*) does not demand that the object-support be nonexistent. On the contrary, distinctions, such as that between accurate and mistaken cognition, are possible only with regard to or among existents; existence and nonexistence share no characteristic by which they may be compared. Accordingly, it is only possible to distinguish accurate from mistaken cognition when those cognitions have an existent object-support. Therefore, Saṅghabhadra assumes that mistaken cognition is not the product of a nonexistent object-support, but rather is a function of the accuracy of cognition. The fact of mistaken cognition demands not only an existent object, but also the possibility that the object in itself and our cognition of it differ.

Vasubandhu explicitly asserts this identity of the object-support with the content of cognition in a discussion of the manner of existence of objects of memory and anticipation.[155] When asked how past and future factors that do not exist can be considered object-supports for perceptual consciousness,

Vasubandhu responds that an object can be said to exist in the manner in which it becomes an object-support. That is to say, past factors are recollected as "having existed," and, therefore, may be described as "having existed;" future factors are anticipated as "coming to exist," and, therefore, may be described as "coming to exist." Since objects are not recollected or anticipated as "existing," one cannot claim that they "exist." Further, Vasubandhu notes that past factors are recollected as they existed when experienced in the present; that is to say, the particular characteristics of a recollected object are not different from those of the object when it was experienced in the present. If, like the Sarvāstivādins, one claimed that these past factors "exist," one would be forced into the contradictory position that past factors are present, because they are cognized with the characteristics of a presently experienced object. Since, for Vasubandhu, the object-support of cognition is the very content of cognition, the object-support of the recollection of a past object is that object in its form as presently experienced. But, since these factors are not present when recollected, we must conclude that the object-support has no existent counterpart.

Saṅghabhadra[156] responds by sharply distinguishing the existent object-support from the cognition of that object-support. For example, when one perceives a pillar as a human being, the object-support, the pillar, does not exist as cognized, that is, as a human being. Likewise, in the case of past and future factors, though they are cognized as they were or will be when experienced in the present, they exist as past or future. Therefore, precisely because the object-support need not be identical to the content of cognition, an existent object-support may condition the arising of an instance of mental perceptual consciousness whose cognitive content has no existing counterpart.

Thus, underlying these specific controversies between the Sarvāstivāda and Dārṣṭāntika schools on the existence or nonexistence of the object-support of perceptual consciousness are two fundamental points of disagreement: first, concerning the causal nature of the object-support, and second, concerning the relation between the object-support and the content of cognition. The controversies precipitated by these disagreements would provide the background for the extensive epistemological inquiries of the Buddhist logicians. Specifically, their later controversies concerning the location of the perceived object, its existential status, the nature of direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), the nature of knowledge as having aspects (*sākāra*), or as being without aspects (*nirākāra*), and the conditioning relations through which perception occurs were all anticipated in these early discussions.

Abbreviations

ADV Padmanabh S. Jaini, ed., *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, Vol. 4, (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1977).

AKB P. Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*, Tibetan San-

skrit Works Series, Vol. 8, (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967) (reprinted ed., 1975).

AKV Unrai Wogihara, ed., *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā: The Work of Yasómitra*, (Tokyo: The Publishing Association of the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, 1932).

AVB *Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra*, T28.1546. Tr. Buddhavarman.

Fa-pao *Chü-she-lun-shu*, T41.1822.

HTAKB *A-p'i-ta-mo-chü-she-lun*, T29.1558. By Vasubandhu, tr. Hsüan-tsang.

PAKB *A-p'i-ta-mo-chü-she-lun*, T29.1559. By Vasubandhu, tr. Paramārtha.

P'u-kuang *Chü-she-tun-chi*, T41.1821.

MA *Madhyamāgama*, T1.26. Tr. Saṅghadeva.

MN Robert Chalmers, ed., *The Majjhima-Nikāya*, 3 Vols., (London: The Pali Text Society, Henry Frowde, 1896–1899) (reprinted ed., London: The Pali Text Society, Luzac and Company, Ltd., 1960).

MVB *Mahāvibhāṣā*, T27.1545. Tr. Hsüan-tsang.

NAS *Nyāyānusāra*, T29.1562. By Saṅghabhadra, tr. Hsüan-tsang.

SA *Saṃyuktāgama*, T2.99. Tr. Guṇabhadra.

SN *The Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, 5 Vols., (London: The Pali Text Society, Henry Frowde, 1884–1898) (reprinted ed., London: The Pali Text Society, Luzac and Company, Ltd., 1960).

T Junjirō Takakusu, Kaikyoku Watanabe, and Gemmyō Ono, eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, (Tokyo, 1924–1932).

TS *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, T32.1646. By Harivarman, tr. Kumārajīva.

VB *Vibhāṣāśāstra*, T28.1547. Tr. Saṅghabhadra.

VK *Vijñānakāya*, T26.1539. Tr. Hsüan-tsang.

Notes

1 For discussions in early non-Buddhist texts see the *Nyāyasūtra* (Taranatha Nyaya-Tarkatirtha, Amarendramohan Tarkatirtha, and Hemantakumar Tarkatirtha, eds., *Nyāyadarśnam*, 2 Vols., The Calcutta Sanskrit Series, Nos. 18, 29, (Calcutta: Metropolitan Printing, 1936–44) (reprinted ed., Kyoto: Rinsen, 1982)); for perception and the time period of the object perceived see 2.1.42, Vol. 1, p. 523; for the composition of objects of perception see 4.2.4–17, Vol. 2, pp. 1043–1058; for the existential status of the object of cognition and false apprehension see 4.2.26–37, Vol. 2, pp. 1072–1089; for references to objects of questionable existential status including the whirling firebrand 3.2.58, Vol. 2, p. 897, eye disorders 4.2.13, Vol. 2, p. 1054, dream images 4.2.34ff, Vol. 2, pp. 1083ff, a pillar seen as a human being 4.2.35 (*bhāṣya*) Vol. 2, p. 1000.

2 Of particular interest to the topic of this paper is Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*. See Susumu Yamaguchi (in collaboration with Henriette Meyer), "Dignāga: Examen de l'objet de la connaissance," *Journal Asiatique*, Vol. 214, (1926), pp. 1–65; Erich Frauwallner, "Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*. Text, Übersetzung und Erläuterungen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Bd. 37 (1930), pp. 174–194 (reprinted in Gerhard Oberhammer and Ernst Steinkellner (eds.), *Erich Frauwallner Kleine Schriften* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), pp. 340–360). For the perception of an object and error (*bhrānti*) in Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* see Masaaki

Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception*, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 47, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 28 (1.7 cd-8 ab), pp. 95–97 (notes #1.53–54), pp. 32–35 (II), pp. 116–120 (notes #2.11–28). For the nature of the object of perception and the four categories of *pratyakṣābhāsa* in the Pratyakṣapramāṇa section of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* see Yūsho Miyasaka, ed., *Pramāṇavārttikakārikā*, in *Acta Indologica*, Vol. 2, (Narita: Naritasan shinshōji, 1971–72), Ch. 2, vss. 194–238, pp. 66–72; Ch. 2, vss. 288–300, p. 80. For the commentary of Prajñākaragupta on the *Pramāṇavārttika* see Rāhula Saṅkṛityāyana (ed.), *Pramāṇavārtikabhāshyam or Vārtikālaṅkāraḥ of Prajñākaragupta*, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, Vol. 1, (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1953), Ch. 2, vss. 194–239, pp. 279–303; Ch. 2, vss. 289–301, pp. 331–338. See also Hiromasa Tosaki, *Bukkyō ninshikiron no kenkyū (jōkan)*, (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1979), pp. 37–43); vss. 194–238, pp. 294–336; vss. 288–300, pp. 382–393. For a discussion of these four categories of *pratyakṣābhāsa* in Jinendrabuddhi's commentary, *Viśālāmalavatī-nāma-pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā*, on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, see Kenshō Hasuba, "Shōshukaku ni yoru Shūryōron no jigenryō kaishaku ni tsuite," in *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku ronsō, Yamaguchi Hakushi kanreki kinen*, (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1955), pp. 205–212. For the perceptual process in Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha* and Kamalaśīla's *Pañjikā* see S.D. Sastri *Tattvasaṃgraha*, 2 Vols., (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1968) *Pratyakṣalakṣaṇaparīkṣā* Vol. 1, pp. 448–493; *Bahirarthaparīkṣā* Vol. 2, pp. 670–711; for error and illusion see Vol. 1, vss. 1311–1328, pp. 479–484; for the two requisite conditions for perceptual consciousness and the possibility of perceptual consciousness without an object-support see Vol. 2 vs. 1787 a-b, pp. 614–616, and Vol. 2, vss. 1846–1848, pp. 630–631.

3 There are a number of groups within the Sarvāstivāda school distinguished by geographical location or textual and instructional lineage. Evidence of these groups can be found in the various Sarvāstivādin masters quoted in the Vibhāṣā commentaries, and in the doctrinal differences among early Sarvāstivādin texts. See Baiyū Watanabe, *Ubu Abidatsuma ron no kenkyū*, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1954), pp. 111–155; Masao Shizutani, *Shōjō Bukkyō shi no kenkyū*, (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1978), pp. 137–140; Giyū Nishi, "Ubu shūnai ni okeru hocchikei hi-hocchikei no shoshu no hakusetsu oyobi gakutō no kenkyū," *Shūkyō kenkyū (shin)*, Vol. 11, (1934–4), pp. 564–579, (1934–5), pp. 768–789. For doctrinal differences among the translations of the Vibhāṣā commentary see Watanabe, op. cit., pp. 253–494; Kōshō Kawamura, *Abidatsuma ronsho no shiryōteki kenkyū*, (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1974), pp. 53–206. For doctrinal differences among post-Vibhāṣā Sarvāstivādin texts see Kawamura, op. cit., pp. 39–52; Taiken Kimura, *Abidatsuma ron no kenkyū*, Vol. 4, *Kimura Taiken zenshū*, 6 Vols., (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1937), pp. 271–324; Ryūjō Yamada, *Daijō Bukkyō seiritsuron josetsu*, (Kyoto: Keirakuji shoten, 1959), pp. 110–124.

4 In the case of the Sarvāstivāda and Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika schools, the term "school" does not indicate distinct disciplinary lineages or monastic affiliation, but rather simply differences in doctrinal interpretation, or instructional or textual lineage. See Shizutani, op. cit., p. 256. The history of the Dārṣṭāntikas and Sautrāntikas are closely intertwined, with the Dārṣṭāntikas as the probable predecessor of the Sautrāntikas. See Shizutani, op. cit., p. 136, pp. 140–147. Though the Vibhāṣā commentaries cite Sautrāntika and Dārṣṭāntika views separately, references to the Dārṣṭāntikas are far more numerous. See Yamada, op. cit., p. 84. The later literature, however, refers almost exclusively to the Sautrāntikas. Note Yaśomitra: "The Dārṣṭāntikas are a variety of the Sautrāntikas." *dārṣṭāntikāḥ sautrāntikaviśeṣā ity arthaḥ*. AKV p. 400.17. Therefore, the correct identification of early masters as Dārṣṭāntikas or Sautrāntikas, if such a distinction was justified in the early period, is exceedingly difficult. See Junshō Katō, "*Ibushūrinron* no tsutaeru Kyōryōbu ni

tsuite," *Daijō Bukkyō kara mikkyō e, Katsumata Shunkyō Hakushi koki kinen ronshū*, (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1976), pp. 175–198.

5 Vasumitra's *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* records the Sarvāstivādin position that thought and thought concomitants must have an object-support (*ālambana*). T49.2031 p. 16.b.21–22; T49.2032 p. 19.a.16; T49.2033 p. 21.b.27–28. It does not refer to a difference of opinion between the Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika schools on this issue. T49.2032 p. 17.b.2ff; T49.2032 p.19.c.11ff; T49.2033 p.22.b.20ff. Compare the *Kathavatthu*. (Arnold C. Taylor, ed., *Kathāvatthu*, 2 Vols., Pali Text Society, Text series Nos. 48, 49, (London: The Pali Text Society, 1894, 1897) (reprinted ed., 1979), 9.4–7 pp. 405–412.

6 The later Sarvāstivādin tradition includes seven texts in their early Abhidharma canon. Following the dating of Hajime Sakurabe (see Hajime Sakurabe, *Kusharon no kenkyū*, (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1971), pp. 41ff), to the earliest period belong the *Saṅgītiparyāya* by Mahākauṣṭhila (Ch. Śāriputra, tr. Hsüan-tsang, T26.1536), and the *Dharmaskandha* by Śāriputra (Ch. Maudgalyāyana, tr. Hsüan-tsang, T26.1537). To the next period belong the *Vijñānakāya* by Devaśarman, (tr. Hsüan-tsang, T26.1539), the *Dhātukāya* by Pūrṇa (Ch. Vasumitra, tr. Hsüan-tsang, T26.1540), and the *Prajñaptiśāstra* by Maudgalyāyana (Ch. unidentified, tr. Dharmapāla?, T26.1538), followed by the *Prakaraṇapāda* by Vasumitra, (tr. Guṇabhadra, T26.1541, and Hsüan-tsang T26.1542). The most recent of the seven texts is the *Jñānaprasthāna* by Kātyāyanīputra, (tr. Saṅghadeva, T26.1543, and Hsüan-tsang, T26.1544). See AKV p. 11.26ff. For further discussions of the dating of these texts see Watanabe, op. cit., pp. 135ff; Erich Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien, II," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-und Ostasiens, Archiv für Indische Philosophie*, Bd. 8, (1964), pp. 59–99.

7 The three Chinese translations, listed in the order of translation, are the *Vibhāṣāśāstra* (tr. Saṅghabhadra ?, T28.1547), the *Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* (tr. Buddhavarman, T28.1546), and the *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (tr. Hsüan-tsang, T27.1545). For a summary of the controversy concerning the dating and doctrinal distinctions among these three translations see Kawamura, op. cit., pp. 53–206, especially pp. 80–83, 118–120, 206.

8 P. Pradhan (ed.), *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, Vol. 8, (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975), the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, by Vasubandhu (tr. Paramārtha, T29.1559, and Hsüan-tsang T29.1558), and U. Wogihara (ed.), *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā: the Work of Yaśomitra*, 2 Vols., (Tokyo: The Publishing Association of Abhidharmakośavyākhyā, 1932). The *Nyāyānusāra* by Saṅghabhadra (tr. Hsüan-tsang, T29.1562), and a partially extant commentary on the *Nyāyānusāra*, the *Shun-cheng-li-lun shu-wen-chi*, by Yüan-yü (*Dai Nippon zokuzōkyō*, 1.83.3). Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, Vol. 4, (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1977).

9 In the *Nyāyānusāra*, Dārṣṭāntika views are most often represented by the teacher, Sthavira. Later sources identify Sthavira as the Sautrāntika master, Śrīlāta. See P'u-kuang 9 p. 172.a.8–10; Fa-pao 9 p. 604.a.5–6; K'ueichi, *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun shu-chi*, T43.1830 4 p. 358.a.9ff. However, from numerous references in the *Nyāyānusāra* it is clear that Saṅghabhadra considers Sthavira to be a Dārṣṭāntika. See NAS 3 p. 347.b.6–7; 11 p. 390.c.20ff; 14 p. 412.c.9ff; 18 p.442.a.25ff; 19 p.445.c.3–4; 25 p.482.a.5ff, b.1–2, b.20ff, c.1–3. See also Junshō Katō, "Kyōryōbu Shurīrāta (ichi)," *Bukkyōgaku*, Vol. 1, (1976), pp. 45–65. Junshō Katō, "Notes sur les deux maîtres bouddhiques Kumāralāta et Śrīlāta," in *Indianisme et Bouddhisme: Mélanges offerts à Mgr Étienne Lamotte*, Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 23, (Louvain-la-neuve: Institut Orientaliste, 1980), pp. 197–213.

10 For textual references to the dating of the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, and to Harivarman as the author of the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* and as a student of the Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika master, Kumāralāta, see Katō, "Notes sur le deux maîtres," pp. 199–200. Paramārtha identifies the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* as representing the Bahuśrutīya school. See Chūgan Chōzen's *Sanrongengi kennyūshū* (T70.2300 5 p. 460.c.8ff, especially c.21), which cites Paramārtha's autocommentary on his translation of Vasumitra's *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* (T49.2033). See Paul Demiéville, "L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'après Paramārtha," *Mélanges chinois et bouddiques*, Vol. 1, (1931–32), pp. 16ff. However, there are frequent points of doctrinal similarity between Dārṣṭāntika or Sautrāntika positions and those of the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*. Chi-tsang in the *Sanlun hsüan-i* (T45.1852 1 p. 3.b.16ff, especially b.24ff) cites various opinions as to the school affiliation of the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* and notes the similarity between Dārṣṭāntika or Sautrāntika views and those of the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*. See also Shōson Miyatnoto, *Daijō to Shōjō*, (Tokyo: Yakumo shoten, 1944), pp. 152–168. Though the exact date of the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* is not known, all historical references agree that Harivarman precedes Vasubandhu.

11 No attention will be given to the later Buddhist and non-Buddhist characterizations of the early Sarvāstivādin and Dārṣṭāntika or Sautrāntika positions. For example, among Buddhist sources, see Mokṣākaragupta's *Tarkabhāṣā*, Embar Krshnamacharya, *Tarkabhāṣā of Mokṣākaragupta*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. 94, (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1942), p. 34.27ff, p. 36.23–24; Yūichi Kajiyama, *An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy, An Annotated Translation of the Tarkabhāṣā of the Mokṣākaragupta*, Memories of the Faculty of Letters, Kyoto University, No. 10, (Kyoto: 1966), p. 62, note #148, pp. 139–140, p. 144. See also Yūichi Kajiyama, "Sonzai to chishiki: Bukkyō tetsugaku shoha no ronsō," *Tetsugaku kenkyū*, Vol. 43, (1966 #6), pp. 207–236, Vol. 43, (1967 #11), pp. 1–28; Gadjin Nagao, "Shoengyōsōmon no ichi mondai," in *Chūgan to Yuishihi*, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1978), pp. 373–388. Among non-Buddhist sources, see Mādhava's *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*, V.S. Abhyankar (ed.), *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*, Government Oriental Series, Class A, No. 1 (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1924) (reprinted ed. 1978); for the characterization of the Sautrāntikas as maintaining *bāhyārthānumeya* and the Sarvāstivādins as maintaining *bāhyārthapratyakṣa* see 2.41–44, p. 19; for the Sautrāntika theory of perception see 2.220–263 pp. 33–37, 2.268–371 p. 46. See also Enshō Kanakura, "Gekyō no bunken ni mieru Kyōryōbu setsu," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku ronsō, Yamaguchi Hakushi kanreki kinen*, (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1955), pp. 55–68; Yūichi Kajiyama, "Setsuissaiubu no shisō o megutte," *Bukkyōgaku seminā*, Vol. 25, (1977), pp. 93–106.

12 See AKB 3.85 c p.176, 12–13, 4.2 c p.193.2; MVB 3 p.12.b.4ff, 39 p.200.a.29ff, 76 p.393.c.14ff, 93 p.480.a.26–27; NAS 13 p.407.c.19ff, 14 p.409.b.2ff, 14 p.410.a.4ff, 15 p.417.b.29ff, 15 p.419.c.2ff, 15 p.421.b.22ff, 18 p.437.c.3ff, 19p.447.a.10ff, 52 p.631.c.5ff, 52 p.633.b.27ff, 52 p.634.a.26.

13 See AKB 3.32 b p.146.4ff; NAS 6 p.365.a.27ff, 15 p.417c.12—p.421.c.24, 18 p.440.a.23–24, 20 p.452.a.16ff, 22 p.467.a.22ff, 25 p.482.a.3ff.

14 SA 13 #306 p.87.c.26ff; SN 12.43 *Dukkhasutta*, 44 *Lokasutta*, 45 *Ñātikasutta*, Vol. 2, pp. 72–75. *cakkhuṃ ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*. See also MA 54 #201 p. 767.a.24ff; MN 1.38 *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhayasutta* Vol. 1, p. 259. For references in Abhidharma texts see *Saṅgītiparyāya* T26.1536 15 p.429.a.15ff; *Dharmaskandha* T26.1537 10 p.501.b.9ff, 10 p.502.c.20–21, 11 p.507.c.25; VK 3 p.545.b.24; *Dhātukāya* T26.1540 (*shang*) p.615.c.4; *Prakaraṇapāda* T26.1542 2 p.699.a.4; MVB 16 p.79.b.20; AKB 5.25 b p.295.16; NAS 2 p.338.c.22, 51 p.627.c.17, 57 p.658.c.8.

15 MA 7 #30 p.467.a.3ff; MN 1.28 *Mahāhatthipadopamasutta* Vol. 1, p. 191.

16 MA 47 #181 p. 723.b.16ff, p. 723.c.14ff; MN 3.115 *Bahudhātukasutta* Vol. 3, pp. 62–63.

17 A distinction between homogeneous (*sabhāga*) and partially homogeneous (*tatsabhāga*) sense organs and object-fields was developed in order to distinguish those that have functioned, are functioning, or will function in a moment of perception (i.e., homogeneous), from those that do not so function, but are nevertheless of the same nature as those that do (i.e., partially homogeneous). This category of the partially homogeneous includes those sense organs or object-fields that arise and pass away without performing their particular function of grasping or being grasped, as well as those future sense organs or object-fields that will never arise. The *dharma* element, as the object-field of mental perceptual consciousness, is exclusively homogeneous since it is considered unreasonable that a mental factor will never be apprehended, or arises and passes away without being apprehended. AKB 1.39 b–d p.27.18ff; NAS 6 p.362.a.7ff; AKB 1.42 b p.30.5–7; NAS 6 p.364.a.26ff; MVB 71 p.368.a.10ff, p.371.a.8ff.

18 Perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*) is identified with thought (*citta*), and mind (*manas*), and is then described as occurring simultaneously with thought concomitants (*caitta*), each of which carries out its own specific mental function. Thought and thought concomitants are said to be associated (*saṃprayukta*) because they are equivalent with respect to basis (*āśraya*), object-support (*ālambana*), aspect (*ākāra*), time period (*kāla*), and the singular instance of their occurrence (*dravya*). AKB 2.34 a–d p.61.22ff; AKV p.141.8.ff; NAS 11 p.394.c.14ff; MVB 16 p.80.b.25ff. For an enumeration of the 46 thought concomitants with which thought may be associated according to the Sarvāstivāda school see AKB 2.23 p.54.3–2.33 p.61.19; NAS 10 p.384.a.8–11 p.394.c.12.

19 See MVB 13 p.61.c.7ff and AVB 8 p.51.b.24ff where four views concerning the proper locus of grasping the object-field are presented: 1) Dharmatrāta claims that visual perceptual consciousness, and not the eye, sees visible color-form; 2) Ghoṣaka claims that the insight (*prajñā*) associated with visual perceptual consciousness sees; 3) the Dārṣṭāntikas claim that the complete collocation (*sāmagrī*) of causes, including the sense organ, and so on, sees; and 4) the Vātsīputrīyas claim that only one eye sees in each successive moment. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* replies that the sense organ, specifically both eyes functioning together, sees form. See also AKB 1.42 p.30.3–43 b p.31.25; AKV p.80.10ff; NAS 6 p.364.a.23ff; and ADV p.31.1ff; MVB 95 p.489.b.28ff. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKB 1.42 c–d p.31.12) identifies this Dārṣṭāntika view as that of the Sautrāntikas.

20 See AKB 1.16 a p.11.6ff. *vijñānaṃ prativijñaptiḥ . . . viṣayaṃ viṣayaṃ prativijñaptir upalabdhir vijñānaskandha ity ucyate*. AKV p.38.22ff; NAS 3 p.342.a.15ff. See also NAS 11 p.396.b.6ff, 25 p.484.b.17ff; MVB 72 p.371.b.22ff. Saṅghabhadra (NAS 3.p.342.a.17ff; *Samayapradīpika*, T29.1563 2 p.783.b.26ff) clearly delimits the functioning of perceptual consciousness to that of apprehending the generic characteristic of the object-field, thereby distinguishing the activity of perceptual consciousness from that of its associated thought concomitants (*caitta*), which apprehend the specific characteristics of the object-field. See also NAS 11 p.390.c.9–11, 11 p.395.a.29ff; P'u-kuang 1 *mo* p.26.a.3ff; Fa-pao 1 *yü* p.486.c.7ff; ADV #120 b p.78.10–13; Kyokuga Saeki, *Kandō abidatsumakusharon*, Vol. 1 (1886) (reprinted ed., Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1978), p.29. Hsüan-tsang in translating this section of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, perhaps under the influence of the *Nyāyānusāra*, modifies *"upalabdhi"* with *"tsung"* meaning grasps in general, or grasps the generic characteristic of the object-field. (HTAKB 1 p.4.a.21; contrast with PAKB I p.164.c.2–3).

21 NAS 11 p.395.a.28ff; NAS 3 p.342.a.18ff; VK 11 p.582.c.20ff. For the distinction

between those thought concomitants associated with mental perceptual consciousness and those associated with the other five types of perceptual consciousness see NAS 29 p.506.c.7ff; VK 6 p.559.b.27ff.

22 AKB 1.10 d p.7.18ff; AKV p.27.29ff; MVB 13 p.65.a.12ff; 127 p.665.b.1ff. As these passages suggest, this particular characteristic of the object-field as a generic sense sphere (*āyatanasvalakṣaṇa*) is not to be confused with the common characteristic (*sāmanyalakṣaṇa*), which is apprehended only by mental perceptual consciousness.

23 See NAS 28 p.501.b.24–25, 4 p.352.a.20–21. Saṅghabhadra (NAS 4 p.350.c.5—p.352.a.25) argues at length against the Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika master, Śrīlāta, who claims that the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness depend upon object-fields that do not exist as real entites. Śrīlāta claims that single atoms are not the object-support of perceptual consciousness because they do not constitute the content of perception. The five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness rely only upon composites (*ho-ho*) of atoms, and these composites, as such, do not exist as real entities. Therefore, the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness do not apprehend actually existing object-fields. Saṅghabhadra responds by distinguishing the term "composite" (*ho-ho, sāmagrī, saṃghāta, samnipāta, saṃhata ?*), used by Śrīlāta, from aggregation (*ho-chi, saṃcita ?*). Saṅghabhadra claims that atoms form an aggregation, not a composite, and this aggregation then allows direct perception to occur. (See also NAS 32 p. 522.a.5–10.) The actually existing object-field that causes perception is still, however, the individual atom. (See NAS 4 p.352.a.18–19.) This composite (*ho-ho*), as proposed by Śrīlāta, exisṭs only provisionally, and hence is apprehended only by mental perceptual consciousness. Saṅghabhadra's attempt to salvage the Sarvāstivādin theory that atoms in aggregation are the object-field of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness by distinguishing *ho-ho* from *ho-chi* constitutes an innovation not found in the Vibhāṣā commentaries. See MVB 13 p.63.c.22–25, 121 p.632.a.24–26; ADV #317 p.277.15ff. See also Sylvain Lévi, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi (Viṃśatikā)*, Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études, Vol. 245, (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1925), vs. 11 p. 6–7; Louis de la Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, Vol. 1, (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1928), p. 44 (notes), p. 45, # 1; Junshō Katō, "Wajū to wagō—Ubu to Kyōbu no busshitsu no toraekata," *Buzaṇ kyōgaku taikai kiyō*, Vol. 1 (not available to me).

24 For the simultaneity of the sense organ and object-field see AKB 1.23 a p.15.24ff; AKV p.50.22ff; NAS 3 p.345.c.9ff. For the simultaneity of the object-field and perceptual consciousness see AKB 1.44 c p.34.3ff; NAS 8 p.374.a.21ff, 8 p.374.b.9ff, 4 p.351.b.29ff.

25 AKB 1.29 c p.19.16ff; AKV p.59.4ff; NAS 4 p.348.b.5ff. The object-field (*viṣaya*) is defined as that with regard to which a factor carries out its activity (*kāritra*); the object-support (*ālambana*) is that which is apprehended by thought and the thought concomitants. For a comparison of the usage of the terms *artha, viśaya, gocara*, and *ālambana* in Abhidharma texts see Akira Hirakawa, "Setsuissaiubu no ninshikiron," *Bungakubu kiyō, Hokkaidō daigaku*, Vol. 2, (1953), pp. 7–8; Kyōdō Yamada, "Abidatsuma Bukkyō ni okeru ninshiki no mondai," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, Vol. 5, (1957–1), pp. 184–187. Unfortunately, Hsüan-tsang does not always distinguish *ālambana* from *viṣaya* in his translations, making the clarification of Saṅghabhadra's understanding of the distinction exceedingly difficult.

26 NAS 15 p.420.c.21—p.421.a.11; AKB 3.32 b p.145.15ff; MVB 16 p.79.b.20–21. According to the Sarvāstivādin system of six causes (*hetu*) and four conditions (*pratyaya*), the co-present cause (*sahabhūhetu*), associated cause (*saṃprayuktahetu*), the efficient variety of the general cause (*kāraṇahetu*), the object-support condition (*ālambanapratyaya*), and the sovereign condition (*adhipatipratyaya*) may be

simultaneous with their effects. Though there is some difference of opinion (see MVB 16 p.79.a.28ff), generally, according to the system of six causes, the sense organ and object-support are both designated efficient general causes, while according to the system of four conditions, the object-support is the object-support condition and the sense organ is the sovereign condition. See MVB 20 p.104.a.4ff; NAS 15 p.417.a.15ff, 18 p.438.a.13ff, 20 p.449.c.16ff; TS 2 #17 p.251.a.20–23.

27 NAS 8 p.374.c.2ff. Saṅghabhadra (NAS 73 p.736.a.9ff) admits three types of direct perception: 1) that through the sense organs (*i-ken-hsien-liang, indriyapratyakṣa ?*), which grasps the five external object-fields through the five sense organs; 2) that through experience (*ling-na-hsien-liang, anubhavapratyakṣa ?*), which is the present occurrence of thought and the thought concomitants of feelings, concepts, and so on; 3) that through cognition (*chüeh-hui-hsien-liang, buddhipratyakṣa ?*), which attains the particular and common characteristic appropriate to each factor. This third type of direct perception arises in dependence upon the first two. The first among these, direct perception through the sense organs, demands the simultaneity of the sense organ, object-field, and perceptual consciousness.

28 AKB 1.17 a–b p.11.21ff; NAS 3 p.342.b.11ff. This mental organ also serves as the basis (*āśraya*) of each of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, which then have two bases: the past mental organ and their respective present sense organ. See MVB 71 p.369.c.14ff; AKB 1.44 c–d p.34.6ff; NAS 8 p.374.a.24ff.

29 NAS 7 p.366.c.4ff; MVB 71 p.369.c.27–29.

30 NAS 6 p.365.c.2ff. The mental organ, as the immediately preceding moment of perceptual consciousness has as its object-support the object apprehended in the preceding moment.

31 AKB 3.30 c–d p.143.25ff; AKV p.305.19ff; NAS 29 p.506.c.3ff; Yüan-yü, *Shun-cheng-li-lun shu-wen-chi*, (*Dai Nippon zokuzōkyō*, 1.83.3), 29 p.262.d.6ff; VK 6 p.559.b.27ff. In these passages, contact associated with mental perceptual consciousness (*manaḥsaṃsparśa*) is explained. This mental contact with the object-support is called designation (*adhivacana*) because names are the primary object-support of mental perceptual consciousness, or because mental perceptual consciousness operates on its object through speech.

32 AKB 1.33 a–d p.22.19ff; AKV p.64.22ff; NAS 4 p.350.b.5ff; MVB 42 p.219.b.7ff; AVB 23 p.169.b.5.

33 NAS 4 p.349.a.23–24, 4 p.350.b.11ff; MVB 42 p.219.a.2ff. See the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 42 p.219.b.7) where conceptual thought in its intrinsic nature (*svabhāvavikalpa*) is identified with both initial inquiry (*vitarka*) and investigation (*vicāra*). For the distinction between *vitarka* and *vicāra* see NAS 11 p.393.c.29ff.

34 MVB 72 p.374.b.5ff; NAS 4 p.349.a.21ff, 4 p.350.b.8; AKB 1.33 a–b p.22.20–23; AKV p.64.29ff.

35 NAS 4 p.350.b.17ff; MVB 42 p.219.b.10ff.

36 NAS 4 p.349.a.16ff.

37 AKB 1.48 a p.36.21ff; NAS 8 p.377.a.1ff; AKB 2.2 a–b p.39.7ff; NAS 9 p.378.a.12ff; MVB 9 p.44.b.3ff.

38 AKB 1.23 a p.15.25ff; AKV p.50.26ff; NAS 3 p.345.c.12; MVB 9 p.44.b.11ff.

39 It is important to note that this ability to apprehend all factors is restricted. Mental perceptual consciousness may not apprehend itself, thought concomitants that are associated with it, and those factors that are its co-present causes (*sahabhūhetu*). These factors may only be apprehended by a subsequent moment of mental perceptual consciousness. See MVB 13 p.65.b.3ff, 71 p.370.c.9ff; NAS 7 p.370.b.22. For these restrictions on knowledge see the discussion of the process by which one knows all factors as non-self: MVB 9 p.42.c.9ff; AKB 7.18 c–d p.404.22ff; AKV p.630.31ff; NAS 74 p.742.a.27ff. TS 15 #191 p.364.a.4ff.

40 NAS 4 p.350.c.20ff, 4 p.351.a.23–29; MVB 21 p.109.b.25. Saṅghabhadra (NAS 58 p.666.a.7ff) identifies entities that exist conventionally (*saṃvṛtisat*) as composite entities (*ho-ho*). There are two such types of composites: 1) those like a jar that can be broken into finer pieces by another object with the result that the conventionally existing jar is destroyed, and 2) those like water that retain their original conventional nature even when divided into smaller amounts; this kind of conventionally existing entity can, nevertheless, be analyzed by insight (*prajñā*), which resolves it into its constituent factors. When these two types of composite entities are thus broken or analyzed, the cognition of their composite nature no longer arises. However, these composite entities are still said to exist conventionally because they have provisional existence as designated by worldly or conventional names. See AKB 6.4 a–d p.333.23ff; AKV p.524.8ff; P'u-kuang 22 p.337.b.13; Fa-pao 22 p.728.a.4. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "Documents d'abhidharma: les deux, les quatre, les trois vérités," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, Vol. 5, (1936–1937), pp.169ff.

41 MVB 13 p.61.c.10–11. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 13 p.61.c.16ff) responds that this position is not reasonable. If, for example, in the case of visual perception, the collocation had the power of sight, it should see at all times, since there is no time when these three are not assembled. The exact referent of this collocation as used in the Dārṣṭāntika view is unclear (perhaps, the sense organ, perceptual consciousness, and the object-field, or all requisite conditions), but the purpose of the Dārṣṭāntika position is to refuse to designate an isolated factor as having prominent causal capability in perception. See ADV p.31.6ff.

42 NAS 7 p.367.b.24ff. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* attributes this theory to the Sautrāntikas (AKB 1.42 c–d p.31.12ff; AKV p.82.27ff). See also ADV #44 p.33.7ff.

43 See NAS 25 p.484.b.19ff where the Dārṣṭāntika master, Śrīlāta rejects the Sarvāstivādin thesis that perceptual consciousness is defined according to its unique function of being aware (*vijānāti*). His intention is to deny that perceptual consciousness exists as an agent, or as a distinct factor having its own unique activity.

44 See NAS 26 p.486.c.18ff.

45 AKB p.473.25ff. *yat tarhi vijñānaṃ vijānāti 'ti sūtra uktaṃ kiṃ tatra vijñānaṃ karoti / na kiṃcit karoti / yathā tu kāryaṃ kāraṇam anuvidhīyata ity ucyate / sādṛśyenā 'tmalābhād akurvad api kiṃcit / evaṃ vijñānam api vijānātī 'ty ucyate / sādṛśyenā 'tmalābhād akurvad api kiṃcit / kiṃ punar asya sādṛśyam / tadākāratā / ata eva tad indriyād apy utpannaṃ viṣayaṃ vijānātī 'ty ucyate ne 'ndriyaṃ / athavā tathā 'trā 'pi vijñānasaṃtānasya vijñāne kāraṇabhāvād vijñānaṃ vijānātī 'ti vacanān nirdoṣaṃ kāraṇe kartṛśabdanirdeśāt*, AKV p.712.31ff. See also P'u-kuang 30 p.448.b.19ff; Fa-pao 30 p.810.a.1ff.

46 NAS 7 p.367.c.1ff.

47 AKB 3.32 b p.145.5ff; AKV p.306.27ff. Vasubandhu does not identify this argument as that of the Dārṣṭāntikas, but such identification is justified from references in the *Nyāyānusāra*, P'u-kuang (P'u-kuang 10 p. 176.c.4–6) and Fa-pao (Fa-pao 10 p.608.a.15–16) attribute this view to the Sautrāntikas.

48 NAS 10 p.385.b.15ff; AKB 3.32 p.145.20ff; AKV p.307.17ff. See also NAS 10 p.386.b.16ff; 29 p.504.a.29ff. The context for the discussion of this process model of perception is śrīlāta's acceptance of only three thought concomitants—feelings (*vedanā*), concepts (*saṃjñā*), and volition (*cetanā*)—rather than the ten thought concomitants (*mahābhūmikadharma*), which are claimed by the Sarvāstivādins to be associated with each moment of thought. See NAS 10 p.384.b.12ff.

49 The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 197 p.984.a.1–3) accepts two types of collocation: 1) that among simultaneous factors; and 2) that among factors that act together to produce a single effect. In the case of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, the sense organ, object-field, and perceptual consciousness function

as a collocation in both ways. However, because mental perceptual consciousness, the mental organ, and the object-field are not simultaneous, they function as a collocation only in the second way, that is as producing a single effect. See also AKB 3.30 b p.143.2ff. The Sarvāstivādins claim that this second type of collocation holds only if the existence of past and future factors is accepted. Since the Dārṣṭāntikas reject the existence of past and future factors, they cannot appeal to a collocation of causes over time—the sense organ, object-field, and perceptual consciousness—in explaining the process of perception. See NAS 10 p.384.c.1ff, 15 p.421.a.12ff.

50 AKB 2.34 b–d p.62.3ff; NAS 11 p.394.c.22ff; MVB 16 p.80.c.16–17.

51 The Dārṣṭāntikas are characterized as rejecting both the distinction between thought and thought concomitants, and the claim that various mental functions arise simultaneously. See MVB 16 p. 79.c.7ff, 52 p.270.a.10ff, 90 p.463.a.20ff, 95 p.493.c.24ff; NAS 11 p.395.a.1ff; Saeki, op. cit., Vol. 1 p. 25. See also TS 5 #60 p. 274.c.19–67 p.278.b.4. For example, Buddhadeva (MVB 2 p.8.c.7–9; 127 p.661.c.17ff; ADV #116 p.76.7ff) identifies the thought concomitants as varieties of thought, and provisionally recognizes three such varieties: feelings, concepts, and volition. For Buddhadeva as a Dārṣṭāntika master see Shizutani, op. cit., p. 140ff. There is, however, some variety in the Dārṣṭāntika position. For example, The Dārṣṭāntika master Śrīlāta (AKB 3.32 p.145.20ff; AKV p.307.17ff; NAS 10 p.384.b.12ff) accepts the three—feelings, concepts, and volition—as thought concomitants, but maintains that these three do not occur simultaneously. See also AKB 3.32 p.146.14ff; AKV p.309.20ff; NAS 10 p.385.b.15ff, 11 p.390.c.20ff, 29 p.503.b.11ff, 29 p.504.a.29ff, 29 p.504.b.15ff. See also Junshō Katō, "Kyōryōbu Shurīrāta (III)," *Buzan kyōgaku taikai kiyō*, Vol. 6, (1978), pp. 109–135.

52 According to the Sarvāstivādins and Dārṣṭāntikas, two instances of thought (*citta*) or perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*) cannot occur simultaneously. See VK 1 p.531.b.6ff, passim. NAS 17 p.435.b.8ff, 19 p.443.b.9ff—p.447.a.22ff; MVB 10 p.47.b.1—p.50.a.19, 140 p.720.a.10ff.

53 NAS 8 p.374.b.12ff.

54 NAS 10 p.384.c.2ff, 15 p.420.c.18ff, 19 p.447.b.16ff.

55 NAS 15 p. 421.c.5ff.

56 NAS 8 p.374.c.2ff; ADV #77 c–d p.47.13ff. "For the Dārṣṭāntikas, nothing is directly perceived. This is due to the fact that the five groups of perceptual consciousness have past object-fields; indeed, when the eye and visual material form are found, perceptual consciousness does not exist, and when perceptual consciousness exists, the eye and visual material form do not exist. Further, this is due to the fact that the apprehension of their own object is impossible given the absence of the continuation [of the object] in the moment of perceptual consciousness." *dārṣṭāntikasya hi sarvam apratyahṣam / pañcānāṃ vijñānakāyānām atītaviṣayatvād yadā khalu cakṣūrūpe vidyete tadā vijñāna asat / yadā vijñānaṃ sac cakṣūrūpe tadā 'satī vijñānakṣaṇasthityabhāve svārtho-palabdhyanupapatteś ca.*

57 *Sāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* T28.1548 9 p.590.a.7–8, p. 593.c.16–18. For the possibility of states of concentration without an existent object-field see also *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* T28.1548 28 p.701.c.10, 30 p.717.a.29-b.2. Though there is some agreement that the *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* represents the view of the Dharmaguptaka school, the dating of the text is, as yet, disputed. See André Bareau, "Les origines du *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra*," *Le Muséon* 63 (1950 #1,2), pp. 69–95; Yamada, op.cit., pp. 79–80; Erich Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien, IV (Fortsetzung)," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sūdasiens, Archiv für Indische Philosophie*, Bd. 16, (1972), pp. 133–152; Kimura, op. cit. pp. 140–160, especially pp. 155–160; Kōgen Mizuno, "Sharikotsuabidonron ni tsuite," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku ronshū, Kanakura Hakushi koki kinen*, (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1966), pp. 109–134.

58 VK 1 p.531.a.26ff. See also *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* T28.1548 9 p.594.c.7ff. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "La controverse du temps et du pudgala dans le *Vijñānakāya*," *Études Asiatiques*, publiées à l'occasion du vingt-cinquième anniversaire de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, (Paris: Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1925), pp. 343–376.

59 For the possible identity of this Maudgalyāyana as the acknowledged patriarch of the Dharmaguptaka school see Vasumitra's *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* T49.2031 p.15.b.16–17; T49.2032 p. 18.a.29ff; T49.2033 p.20.b.15–17; Baiyū Watanabe, tr., *Abidatsumashikishinsokuron*, in *Kokuyaku issaikyō, Indo senjutsubu, Bidonbu*, Vol. 4, (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1931), p. 12 note #22; Shizutani, op.cit., pp. 173–181.

60 For the attribution of this view to the Dharmaguptaka school, see *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* T49.2031 p.16.c.26–27; T49.2032 p.19.b.12–13; T49.2033 p.22.a.16–17. Compare the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 76 p.393.a.18ff), which cites the following contested view: "Further, there are fools who, with regard to the intrinsic nature of [factors in] the three time periods, deny as nonexistent [those of the] past and future and maintain that [those of the] present are unconditioned." See also MVB 13 p.65.b.26–27, 37 p.190.a.10–11.

61 VK 1 p.535.a.8ff.

62 MVB 105 p.554.c. 15–17, 136 p.704.a.7–9; 146 p.747.b.15–17, 195 p.975.a.3–5, 197 p.983.a.23–25. AVB 55 p.393.b.10–12.

63 MVB 16 p.79.a.19–21, 55 p.283.a.22–24, 131 p.680.b.26–27, 136 p.702.b.13–15. See also AVB 30 p.218.c.14ff.

64 MVB 44 p.228.b.20ff. See also MVB 108 p.558.a.7ff.

65 MVB 8 p.36.a.16ff. See also Johannes Rahder, "La satkāyadṛṣṭi d'après Vibhāṣā, 8," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, Vol. 1, (1931–1932), pp. 227–239.

66 MVB 75 p.390.c.34ff. See also AVB 6 p.455.c.8ff.

67 MVB 37 p.193.b.2ff.

68 MVB 135 p.696.b.24ff, 44 p.228.b.22ff.

69 MVB 195 p.975.a.2ff.

70 MVB 9 p.42.a.20ff.

71 See also the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* T25.1509 26 p.255.a.15ff. A text that does not include the need for an existent object-support among the reasons for the existence of past and future factors is the *Saṃyuktābhidhar-mahṛdayaśāstra* T28.1552 11 p.963.b.2ff. This reason is also omitted from the two most recent translations of the Vibhāṣā commentary (MVB 76 p.393.a.9ff; AVB 40 p.293.c.18ff), but is found in the oldest translation (VB 7 p.464.b.26ff).

72 TS 2 #21 p.255.b.12ff.

73 See also TS 15 #191 p.364.a.7ff.

74 AKB 5.25 p.295.8ff; AKV p.468.28ff.

75 AKB 5.25 b p.295.16 *dvayaṃ pratītya vijñānasyo 'tpāda ity uktam*. See SN 35.93 *Dutiyadvayasutta* Vol. 4 p. 67; SA 8 #214 p.54.a.22ff. See also SN 12.43–45 Vol. 2 pp. 72–75; ADV #306 a—b p.269.2ff.

76 TS 2 #19 p.253.c.27ff.

77 NAS 50 p.621.c.14ff.

78 NAS 50 p.621.c.20–21. See also NAS 17 p.430.a.10–11, 20 p.450.c.24–25. For the necessity of an object-field in the arising of *prajñā* see NAS 17 p.432.a.7ff.

79 ADV #304 a p.262.1. *buddhyā yasye 'kṣyate cihnaṃ*. . .

80 ADV #304 p.262.3ff. *yasya khalv arthavastunaḥ svabhāvasiddha-svarūpasyā 'viparītākārayā dharmopalakṣaṇayā paricchinnaṃ lakṣaṇam upalakṣyate tatsaddravyam ity ucyate*. See also ADV #305 c–d p.264.2. "Those [past and future factors] have existence like present [factors] due to their nature as the range of thought and name." *dhīnāmagocaratvāc ca tat sattvaṃ vartamānavat*. See also ADV

#305 p.268.22–24. "That object whose particular and common characteristic is determined by cognition having the aspect of that [object], and which is referred to by the group of names and group of factors declared by the Buddha, that exists from the absolute standpoint." *tadākārayā khalu buddhyā yasyā 'rthasya svasāmānyalakṣaṇaṃ paricchidyate yaś ca buddho-ktanāmakāyadharmakāyābhyām abhidyotyate sa paramārthato vidyate.*

81 NAS 50 p.621.c.21ff. See also NAS 15 p.421.b.28ff, 19 p.447.c.23ff. Unlike existence, absolute nonexistence cannot be classified according to types because it lacks any particular characteristic by which it can be distinguished, and thereby compared or contrasted. See NAS 17 p.431.c.8ff.

82 The *Abhidharmadīpa* (ADV #304 p.262.2ff) adds two types of existence to those mentioned by Saṅghabhadra: 1) existence through both (*dvaya, ubhayathā*), referring to entities that can be understood as either real or provisional depending upon the context; for example, earth (*pṛthivī*), when understood as one of the four fundamental elements (*mahābhūta*), exists in an absolute sense, and when understood as ordinary dirt, exists only in a conventional sense; 2) relative existence (*sattvāpekṣā*), which refers to such correlative states as father/son, teacher/student, or agent/action. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 9 p.42.a.24ff) includes three different classifications of types of existence. The first includes two types: 1) existence as a real entity (*dravya*), such as the aggregates (*skandha*), or elements (*dhātu*), and 2) existence as a provisional entity (*prajñapti*), such as male or female. The second classification includes three types: 1) relative existence (*hsiang-tai, apekṣā ?*), as when something exists relative to one thing and not relative to another; 2) existence as a composite (*ho-ho, sāmagrī ?*) as when something exists in one place and not in another; and 3) existence in accord with temporal state (*shih-fen, avasthā ?*), as when something exists at one time and not at another. The third classification includes five types: 1) nominal existence (*nāma*), such as hair on a tortoise, the horn of a hare, and so on; 2) existence as a real entity (*dravya*), such as all factors (*dharma*), each of which is defined by intrinsic nature; 3) existence as a provisional entity (*prajñapti*), such as a pot, cloth, a chariot, and so on; 4) existence as a composite (*ho-ho, sāmagrī ?*), such as the personality (*pudgala*), which is a provisional designation based on a collocation of the aggregates; and 5) relative existence (*hsiang-tai, apekṣā ?*), such as this and that shore, or long and short.

83 NAS 52 p.636.a.22–24.

84 See NAS 50 p.624.c.6ff. Saṅghabhadra uses this point to suggest that past and future factors cannot be said to exist only provisionally. If this were the case, they would lack a real basis and could not produce cognition. See ADV #303 p.261.10ff.

85 NAS 50 p.622.a.16ff. See TS 2 #19 p.254.a.3ff: "Knowledge also operates with regard to a nonexistent range." See also ADV #305 p.268.27. "[What] if there were cognition even having a nonexistent object-support?" *asad ālambanā 'pi buddhir astī 'ti cet.*

86 TS 2 #19 p.254.a 4ff; NAS 50 p.622.a.19ff; ADV #306 c–d p.271.3ff. In the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and *Nyāyānusāra*, these examples are attributed to the Dārṣṭāntikas. I have grouped the various examples in similar categories for clarity of exposition. For discussion of these examples see Yukio Sakamoto, *Abidatsuma no kenkyū, Sakamoto Yukio ronbunshū*, Vol. 1, (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1981), pp. 135–156; Shingyō, Yoshimoto, *Abidaruma shisō*, (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1982), pp. 146–156; Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "Documents d'abhidharma: la controverse du temps," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, Vol. 5, (1936–1937), pp. 25–128.

87 NAS 50 p.623.c.18ff. See TS 2 #19 p.254.b.8ff.

88 NAS 50 p.623.b.8ff.

89 See also MVB 8 p.36.a.21–25; AKB 6.58 b p.374.26ff; AKV p.587.18ff. For an

extensive discussion of *satkāyadṛṣṭi* see MVB 49 p.255.a.21ff; AKB 5.7 p.281.19ff; NAS 47 p.605.c.29ff.

90 NAS 50 p.623.b.17ff. See also MVB 8 p.36.a.21ff.

91 NAS 50 p.623.b.19. See also NAS 4 p.351.b.19ff.

92 The meaning of the term *ākāra* and the sense in which all thought and thought concomitants are said to have *ākāra* became a controversial issue for the Sarvāstivāda and Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika schools with significant implications for later Buddhist epistemological theory. For the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas and Saṅghabhadra, *ākāra* means the discriminative function of insight. Thought and thought concomitants are also said to have an aspect (*sākāra*), but only by extension from association with insight, or in the sense that they perform their own activity in apprehending the object-support. This interpretation stands in sharp contrast to Vasubandhu's concept of *ākāra* as thought and thought concomitants taking shape or taking on an aspect consistent with the type or character of the object-support. Contrast AKB 2.34 c–d p.62.6; AKV p.141.29ff; to NAS 11 p.394.c.25–26; *Samayapradīpika* T29.1563 6 p.803.a.17–18; ADV #482 p.376.3–4. See also NAS 74 p.741.a.21ff; P'u-kuang 1 *mo* p.26.b.26ff, 4 p.83.b.26ff, 26 p.394.a.21ff; Fa-pao 4 p.534.c.4ff,26 p.770.b.2ff; Saeki, op. cit., Vol. 3, p.1101ff.

93 MVB 7 p.409.a.10–11; NAS 74 p.741.b.12ff. For the definition of *ākara* as insight see AKB 7.13 b p.401.18ff; NAS 74 p.741.a.19ff; ADV #482 c–d p.375.16ff.

94 MVB 126 p.658.b.27ff. For a discussion of the difference between error (*luan-tao, vibhrama, bhrānti ?*) and mistaken views (*tien-tao, viparyāsa*), and their relation to defilements and conceptual thought (*vikalpa*) see MVB 166 p.841.b.2ff; NAS 47 p.608.c.17ff. For a discussion of the relation between the production of defilements and conceptual thought see MVB 61 p.315.b.6ff. For a discussion of the character of insight when associated with mental perceptual consciousness as distinguished from that associated with the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness see MVB 95 p.490.c.4ff.

95 AKB 6.9 p.337.8–6.13 p.341.6; NAS 59 p.671.a.1–60 p.674.a.24; AKB 8.29 p.452.4–8.36 p.458.10: NAS 79 p.768.c.20–80 p.774.c.5: MVB 81 p.420.b.8–85 p.442.b.14. See also *Kathāvatthu*, op. cit., 5.3 pp. 305–307.

96 For a discussion of *adhimuktimanaskāra* as one of three types of attention see AKB 2.72 d p.108.11ff; AKV p.246.32ff; NAS 20 p.454.c.14ff; MVB 82 p.422.c.27. For the various meanings of the term "*adhimukti*" see Hajime Sakurabe "Shōge 'adhimukti' ni tsuite," in *Bukkyō go no kenkyū*. (Kyoto: Buneidō, 1975), pp. 34–39.

97 MVB 85 p.440.b.11ff, p.441.a.25ff.

98 NAS 50 p.622.a.19; TS 2 # 19 p.254.a.4.

99 NAS 50 p.623.b.23ff. The *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (TS 2 #19 p.254.a.27ff) cites another explanation: since the quality or nature of the color blue exists even in things that are not perceived as blue, this blue nature in all things can serve as the object-field for the cognition of total and exclusive blueness.

100 MVB 37 p. 193.b.4ff; TS 2 #19 p.254.a.7–8, p.254.c.25ff.

101 See MVB 37 p.193.b.23ff; AVB 28 p.145.c. 11ff; NAS 50 p.623.c.9ff.

102 NAS 3 p.346.a.17ff.

103 NAS 50 p.623.c.13ff. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 38 p. 194.a.28ff) presents several opinions as to whether or not all dream images must be the result of past experience. Though no explicit judgment is offered, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* clearly favors the opinion that all dream images result from object-supports that have been experienced. See also NAS 3 p.346.a.17ff.

104 MVB 37 p.193.c.24ff.

105 The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 37 p.194.b.27ff) explains that in the case of oneiromancy, one knows future events in a dream through inference; one infers that a certain event

will occur in the future on the basis of an experienced cause and effect relation between the past and present.

106 The causes for dreams offered by Saṅghabhadra (NAS 50 p.623.c.9ff) and the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (TS 2 #19 p.254.b.13ff) are generally consistent with those in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* with a few exceptions: both Saṅghabhadra and the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* omit dream images based on future events, and the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* adds past actions (*karma*) as a possible cause.

107 MVB 75 p.390.c.3ff. See also VB 6 p.455.c.8ff.

108 NAS 23 p.470.a.6–474.a.5; AKB 3.11 c–d p.120.20ff; AKV p.267.29ff. In this section, an opponent offers the example of a reflected image to disprove the existence of the intermediate state (*antarābhava*) between death and rebirth. That is to say, just as there is an interruption between the reflected image and the original object, so there is an interruption between death and rebirth and no intermediate state is required. Vasubandhu claims that since the reflected image does not exist, it should not be compared to the aggregates at rebirth. Saṅghabhadra, on the other hand, argues strongly in defense of the existence of the reflected image, and claims that there is a connection between the reflected image and the original object.

109 NAS 23 p.473.a.8ff.

110 NAS 23 p.471.b.12ff.

111 NAS 23 p.472.a.22; AKB 3.12 a p.121.5–6. *ato nā 'sty eva tat kiṃcit/ sāmagryās tu sa tasyās tādṛśaḥ prabhāvo yat tathā darśanaṃ bhavati*. See also AKV p.269.16ff.

112 NAS 23 p.472.b.23ff.

113 MVB 135 p.696.b.24ff. For a discussion of the arising of magical creations from the supernormal power that actualizes the knowledge of objects produced by magical power (*ṛddhiviṣaye jñānasākṣātkriyā abhijñā*) see AKB 7.42 p.421.6ff; NAS 76 p.752.c.17ff. (especially AKB 7.44 d p.423.5–6; NAS 76 p.753.c.15–17; AKB 7.48 p.425.5–7.53 p.429.3; NAS 76 p.754.b.29–76 p.755.c.2).

114 NAS 50 p.623.b.27ff.

115 NAS 50 p.623.c.28ff; ADV #306 c–d p.271.1ff.

116 NAS 50 p.622.a.24–25; AKB 5.27 c p.300.18–21; SA 26 #703 p.189.a.22ff.

117 NAS 50 p.623.c.29-p.624.a.8.

118 Saṅghabhadra clearly distinguishes the sound of speech, which is material form, from name (*nāma*), which is classified as an independent conditioned factor dissociated from both thought and material form (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*). The specification here would be synonomous with name. See NAS 14 p.413.a.17ff; p.413.b.16ff; p.414.a.16ff; p.414.a.29ff; p.414.b.22ff; p.414.b.22ff.

119 NAS 50 p.624.a.8ff.

120 Though Saṅghabhadra does not identify these two types of negations, they appear to correspond to the implicative or exclusionary negation (*paryudāsapratiṣedha*) and simple or prohibitive negation (*prasajyapratiṣedha*), which were used extensively in Indian grammatical, ritualistic and philosophical texts. See George Cardona, "Negations in Pāṇinian Rules," *Language*, Vol. 43, (1967–1), pp. 34–56; J.F. Staal, "Negation and the Law of Contradiction: A Comparative Study," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 25, (1962–1), pp. 52–71. For references in later Buddhist texts see Yūichi Kajiyama, "Three Kinds of Affirmation and Two Kinds of Negation in Buddhist Philosophy," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sūdasiens*, Bd. 17, (1973), pp. 181–175.

121 NAS 50 p. 624.a.18ff.

122 Saṅghabhadra here uses the argument that expressions can lack a specified object because otherwise there would be no worldly speech that lacks meaning. Saṅghabhadra then cites another opinion that all expressions must have a specified object because these expressions are specifications. In the case of expressions such as

"nonexistence" or "thirteenth sense sphere" the specified object would be the name or concept and not some objective "nonexistence" or "thirteenth sense sphere." See also AKB 5.27 c p.300.7ff; AKV p.475.11ff. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 15 p. 72.c.2–5) similarly explains that all names are able to manifest meaning and that even names such as the "thirteenth sense sphere" manifest the concept, "thirteenth sense sphere."

123 The terms *hetusamutthāna* and *tatkṣaṇasamutthāna* are used to explain the immediate causes by which manifest verbal or corporeal action (*vijñaptirūpa*) arises. See AKB 4.10 p.203.13ff; AKV p.364.17ff; NAS 36 p.547.a.2ff; MVB 117 p.610.a.5ff.

124 TS 15 #191 p.364.b.9–10.

125 ADV #306 c–d p.271.16–17. "If one claimed that there is cognition having a nonexistent object-support due to the existence [of a cognition] whose object-field of cognition is the denial of the thirteenth sense sphere, [we would reply] no, because it has been demonstrated by the Lord that this [cognition] is merely based upon speech." *trayodaśāyatanapratiṣedhabuddhiviṣayād astitvād asadālambanā buddhir astī 'ti cet / na / Bhagavatai 'va vāgvastumātram etad iti nirṇītatvāt.* In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas respond to a similar objection claiming that the name (*nāma*), "thirteenth sense sphere," serves as the object-support of one's cognition of the denial of the thirteenth sense sphere. AKB 5.27 c p.300.8–9 "Then what is the object-support of the perceptual consciousness of the statement, "there is no thirteenth sense sphere?" That has only name as its object-support." *atha trayodaśam āyatanaṃ nā 'stī 'ty asya vijñānasya kim ālambanam / etad eva nāmālambanam.* See also AKV p.475.14ff. Since the Sarvāstivādins claim that names exist as real entities, classified as factors dissociated from thought and material form, names can serve as the existent object-support for the arising of cognition.

126 ADV #306 c–d p.271.1–15, p.272.3–15.

127 ADV #306 c–d p.272.13–15. *tasmān naño na goviṣāṇādiḥṇā 'pi śaśaviṣāṇādiḥ pratiṣidhyate / kiṃ tarhi / śaśākāśadhātusaṃbandhabuddhyapekṣeṇa goviṣāṇādidravyāsaṃbandhabuddhayo 'vadyotyante.*

128 NAS 50 p.624.b.4ff. See also AKB 5.27 c p.300.9ff; AKV p.475.17ff.

129 NAṢ 17 p.431.b.12ff; AKB 2.55 d p.93.7ff. See also Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "Documents d'abhidharma: textes relatifs au nirvāṇa et aux asaṃskṛtas en général, II" *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Vol. 30, (1930), pp.277ff. In this section, Vasubandhu cites the Sautrāntika opinion that the unconditioned factors (*asaṃskṛtadharma*)—space (*ākāśa*), cessation through application (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*), and cessation not through application (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*)—do not exist as real entities, but rather are mere absences (*abhāva*). (AKB 2.55 d p.92.4) Nevertheless, the Sautrāntikas assert that unconditioned factors can be said to exist in the same way in which it can be said that there is the prior or subsequent nonexistence of sound. However, this mere statement that they exist does not mean that absences (*abhāva*) themselves exist as entities (*bhāva*).

130 NAS 50 p.624.b.22ff.

131 AKB 5.27 d p.300.10ff.

132 Saṅghabhadra distinguishes absolute nonexistence, like the horn of a hare, from the nonexistence of that which has not yet been produced (i.e., a future factor), or has already passed away (i.e., a past factor). These last two are nonexistent only in the sense that they lack activity. Even though they do exist as entities having intrinsic nature, they are recognized to be nonexistent in comparison to the present, which is characterized by both activity and intrinsic nature. NAS 15 p.419.c.5ff.

133 MVB 12 p.55.c.29ff; AVB 6 p.42.b.16ff. For a discussion of how recollection

occurs without a personality (*pudgala*) or a continuous substratum see MVB 11 p.55.a.16–12 p.58.c.18.

134 MVB 12 p.57.c.24–26.

135 AKB 2.24 p.54.22–23. *smṛtir ālambanāsaṃpramoṣaḥ*. Whereas Paramārtha's translation (PAKB 3 p.178.b.14–15) corresponds to this definition of *smṛti*, Hsüan-tsang (HTAKB 4 p. 19.a.20–21) in his translation adds *ming-chi* (*abhilapana*), or notation, possibly under the influence of Saṅghabhadra's explanation. Yaśomitra (AKV p.127.32ff) comments: "Mindfulness is that by connection with which the mind does not forget the object-support, and, as it were, notes that [object-support]." *yadyogād ālambanaṃ na mano vismarati tac cā 'bhilapatī 'va sā smṛtiḥ*.

136 NAS 10 p.384.b.7–8. See also ADV # 112 p.69.6–7 "Mindfulness has as its form the functioning of thought. It is the notation of the object of thought and has the characteristic of not losing action that has been, will be, or is being performed." *cittavyāpārarūpā smṛtiḥ / cittasyā 'rthābhilapanā kṛtakartavyakriyamāṇakarmāntāvipramoṣalakṣaṇā*. Compare *Abhidharmāvatāraśāstra* T28.1554 *shang* p.982.a.18–19. See also ADV #446 p.360.14–16. For definitions of *smṛti* in terms of *abhilapana* in the early Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts see *Dharmaskandha* T26.1537 7 p.485.a.7; *Dhātukāya* T26.1540 (*shang*) p.614.c.20ff; *Saṅgītiparyāya* T26.1536 16 p.433.b.6ff, 17 p.437.a.13ff; *Prakaraṇapāda* T26.1541 2 p.699.c.17ff.

137 NAS 10 p.389.b.12ff.

138 This statement is also significant because it indicates that for the Sarvāstivādins, mindfulness as notation (*abhilapana*) operates not only in moments of mental perceptual consciousness, but also in all moments of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness. However, since mindfulness associated with the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness is weak, it is not considered to be conceptual thought through recollection (*anusmaraṇavikalpa*). (NAS 4 p.350.b.17ff). This view is to be contrasted with that of Yaśomitra (AKV p.65.10–11) who claims that mindfulness does not operate as notation in moments of the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness: "Because mindfulness associated with the five types of perceptual consciousness does not operate through the notation of the experienced object, it is not considered to be conceptual thought through recollection." *pañcavijñānakāyasaṃprayuktā tu nā 'nubhūtārthābhilāṣa(read abhilāpa) pravṛtte 'ti nā 'nusmaraṇavikalpa itī 'ṣyate*.

139 See P'u-kuang 4 p.74.b.21ff; Fa-pao 4 p.527.c.13ff.

140 MVB 11 p.51.b.14ff. Here the *Mahāvibhāṣā* examines the problem of how the Buddha knows the sequence in which future factors arise, since they, as yet, lack sequence and are disordered. (*vyākula*). Compare MVB 179 p.897.b.24ff; AKB 2.62 a–b p.98.29ff; AKV p.233.30ff; NAS 19 p.444.b.9ff; P'u-kuang 7 p.135.a.8ff.

141 Though the particular *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra* is not identified in this passage in the *Mahāvbhāṣā*, it can only refer to possession (*prāpti*). For *prāpti* described as *cihna* see Yaśomitra (AKV p.148.22–23) who quotes Saṅghabhadra (NAS 12 p.397.b.4–6): "Possession is the indicative mark of the knowledge that 'this belongs to that,' and is the cause of the non-disappearance of factors that have been obtained." *idam asye 'ti jñānạcihnaṃ pratilabdhadharmāvipranāśakāraṇaṃ ca prāptir ity ācāryasaṅghabhadraḥ*.

142 MVB 178 p.895.a.26–179 p.898.a.12. See also MVB 76 p.395.b.29ff; AVB 40 p.295.c.1ff; VB 7 p.466.a.14–15; AKB 7.37 a–b p.417.19ff; AKV p.651.28ff; NAS 75 p.750.b.18. For the various interpretations of the term *praṇidhijñāna* see MVB 178 p.896.a.13ff. Two of the Buddha's powers are also significant here: the power of the knowledge of previous birthstates (*pūrvanivāsajñānabala*), which knows past factors, and the power of the knowledge of death and rebirth (*cyutyupapattijñānabala*), which knows future factors. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 100 p.517.a.3ff) dis-

cusses the complex issue of these powers, contrasting them with the supernormal power that actualizes the knowledge of the recollection of previous birthstates (*pūrvanivāsānusmṛtijñānasākṣātkārābhijñā*) and the supernormal power that actualizes the knowledge of death and rebirth (*cyutyupapādajñānasākṣātkārābhijñā*). See also AKB 7.29 c p.412.4ff; NAS 75 p.746.a.18ff; AKB 7.42 p.421.6ff; NAS p.752.c.17ff.

143 NAS 51 p.628.b.8ff.

144 TS 15 # 191 p.364.a.13ff.

145 AKB 5.27 c p.299.20ff; AKV p.474.9ff; NAS 51 p.627.c.19ff.

146 For a discussion of whether or not unconditioned factors (*asaṃskṛtadharma*) may serve as causes, and if so, as what type of cause see AKB 2.55 d p.91.18ff; AKV p.218.18ff; NAS 17 p.429.a.3ff.

147 NAS 19 p.447.b.29-p.447.c.9.

148 For various interpretations of the general definition of causal relation—"when this exists, that exists; from the production of this, that is produced" (*asmin satī 'dam bhavati asyo 'tpādād idam utpadyate*)—see AKB 3.28 a–b p.138.28ff; NAS 15 p.419.a.7ff, 25 p.482.a.ff: AKV p.297.9ff. For Śrīlāta's interpretation of the nature of this causal relation see NAS 15 p.419.a.7ff.

149 NAS 51 p.628.c.3ff.

150 NAS 51 p.628.c.6–8.

151 NAS 51 p.628.a.4ff. See also Fa-pao 7 p.578.b.2ff.

152 NAS 19 p.447.c.9ff; 51 p.628.c.27ff.

153 Saṅghabhadra (NAS 19 p.448.a.8ff) also criticizes Śrīlāta's theory of the secondary or subsidiary element (*sui-chieh = anudhātu ?, or chiu-sui-chieh = pūrvānudḥātu?*), which Śrīlāta uses to account for all types of causal relations. Saṅghabhadra identifies this secondary element with the seeds (*bīja*) proposed by Vasubandhu. Since both the secondary element and seeds function causally only through a successive relation within the psycho-physical series, their proper operation requires the existence of past and future factors. Since neither Śrīlāta nor Vasubandhu admits the existence of past and future factors, their models are, in Saṅghabhadra's opinion, untenable. See NAS 18 p.440.b.3ff.

154 AKB 5.27 c p.300.16–17 ... *sarvabuddhīnāṃ sadālambanatve kuto 'sya vimarśaḥ syāt* ... NAS 50 p.622.c.13ff. Yaśomitra (AKV p.476.7–10) glosses *vimarśa* with investigation (*vicāra*), or doubt, (*saṃdeha*). He comments: "When there are existent and nonexistent object-supports of cognition, this deliberative reflection is possible; not otherwise." *sadasadālambane tu buddhīnām ayaṃ vimarśaḥ sambhavati nā 'nyathā.*

155 AKB 5.27 c p.299.24ff; AKV p.474.15ff; NAS 51 p.628.a.27ff.

156 NAS 51 p.628.b.11ff.

Chinese terms

Chüeh-hui-hsien-liang 覺慧現量
Chiu-sui-chieh 舊隨界
Ho-chi 和集
Ho-ho 和合
Hsiang-tai 相待
I-ken-hsien-liang 依根現量
Ling-na-hsien-liang 領納現量
Luan-tao 亂倒

Ming-chi 明記
Tien-tao 顛倒
Tsung 總
Shih-fen 時分
Sui-chieh 隨界

a. 婼羌
b. 依
c. 依果
d. 黃文弼
e. 新疆考古採報告

51

BHĀVAVIVEKA AND THE EARLY MĀDHYAMIKA THEORIES OF LANGUAGE

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In the last fifty years, Western interpreters of Mādhyamika Buddhist philosophy have worked diligently to devise a philosophical vocabulary in which the insights and techniques of the Mādhyamika dialecticians can be accurately and intelligibly expressed to Western readers.[1] This is not an easy task, but it has sometimes been done quite effectively.[2] Even in the most successful studies, however, one element is often conspicuously lacking. Scholars have compared the work of early Mādhyamika philosophers with similar work in the West, but they have been reluctant for various reasons to compare the early Mādhyamika philosophers with each other.[3] This, of course, has led to a certain admirable simplicity in the results of their comparison, but it has sacrificed a degree of sophistication and philosophical accuracy that would enrich their results. In this article I would like to redress the balance in one small area by considering the development of the theory or theories of language in the works of Nāgārjuna, Bhāvaviveka, and Candrakīrti. By so doing, I hope to demonstrate that a sure way to promote conceptual accuracy in the comparative enterprise is to understand how individual philosophers in the Mādhyamika tradition chose to develop and differentiate themselves from the work of their predecessors.

The comparison of early Mādhyamika philosophers with each other has been hindered in recent years by the relative scarcity of major texts translated into Western languages. We are fortunate to have translations of the basic works of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, but we only have fragments of the works of other authors like Buddhapālita and Bhāvaviveka, and original Tibetan works on Mādhyamika philosophy are almost unknown in Western languages.[4] This imbalance has led, perhaps inevitably, to the notion that early Mādhyamika philosophy was considerably more homogeneous than it actually was. What is necessary now to expand our understanding of this school is greater familiarity with the lesser known authors, like Bhāvaviveka, and with the great Tibetan

scholars like Tsoṅ-kha-pa, who wrestled in their own works with the diversity of the early philosophy. Such familiarity would show that the homogeneity of the early tradition is merely apparent. In fact, Bhāvaviveka distinguished himself quite sharply from the earlier tradition on certain points, and Candrakīrti, in turn, distinguished himself from Bhāvaviveka. Tsoṅ-kha-pa and his successors recognized this and, in their own efforts to harmonize the differences, gave a very useful account of the ways in which the two disagreed.

Theories of language play an important part in the Mādhyamika philosophy of the early period, not primarily because the individual philosophers were interested in constructing a positive semantic theory, although that interest did impinge somewhat on the works of Bhāvaviveka and Candrakīrti, but because the disputes between Mādhyamika and rival Indian schools were often, at bottom, cast in terms of disagreements over the use of language. This is perhaps a natural consequence of the Mādhyamika critical method. Mādhyamika philosophers were interested more in devising a critical scheme for removing their opponents' misconceptions than they were in building their own positive theory. In the absence of shared metaphysical assumptions, their criticism often took the form of objections to certain uses of language. The Mādhyamika account of language is thus useful, in the first case, as a mirror of the relationship between Mādhyamika philosophers and their Indian opponents, but its importance is not limited just to this. The account of language is also closely related to a central Mādhyamika notion, the two levels of truth. Mādhyamika philosophers recognized this as a distinction between a level of nonconceptual, ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) and a level of truth that lay within the domain of concepts and words (*vyavahāra*). The two were distinct, but the second was understood to function in some way as a vehicle for the first.[5] The account of language given by any particular Mādhyamika philosopher necessarily affected his notion both of the exact nature of the distinction between the two truths and of the way one served indirectly to express the other. An understanding of the development of Mādhyamika accounts of language is thus useful to us in a number of ways, both in describing the Mādhyamika response to other Indian schools and in following internal differences on certain fundamental points. It also has the advantage, as will be evident later, of sharply delineating basic differences between Bhāvaviveka and Candrakīrti.

Nāgārjuna laid the groundwork for later Mādhyamika accounts of language in the second century A.D., at a time when Indian philosophers were becoming conscious in a rudimentary way of the need to formulate rules for debate between opposing philosophical schools. Sanskrit was being used increasingly as a tool for learned discourse, and the Hindu logicians were attempting to develop a theory of semantics and syllogistic reasoning on which philosophical argument could be based. Nāgārjuna's position in this philosophical environment was necessarily rather ambiguous. He was committed, as a Sanskrit dialectician, to the process of discussion and debate facilitated by the developments in Hindu logic, but he could not, as a Buddhist, accept the ontology on which the

theories were based. In particular, he could not accept the notion advanced by the Hindu logicians that the meaning of a term was the substantial entity to which it referred. He appeared, in fact, to assert exactly the opposite, namely, that all things are empty of substantial reality, and terms which refer to such things are equally empty of reality, since there is no real substance to which they refer. In the terminology of the Sanskrit philosophical schools this was expressed in the following words: "Nothing at all possesses intrinsic nature" (*sarveṣāṃ bhāvānāṃ sarvatra na vidyate svabhāvaḥ*).[6] For Nāgārjuna this quasi-assertion posed a basic problem concerning the function of language. The problem is simply this: if all things are empty (*śūnya*) of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), then terms that refer to them are similarly empty. In the semantic theory of the Hindu logicians, an empty term, that is, one with no reference, is meaningless. So to say "all things are empty of intrinsic nature" is to say that all terms are meaningless, including those in the assertion itself. The assertion is thus useless as a means of argument.

Nāgārjuna formulated this problem for himself in the first part of the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*. Here an objector says:

> [Vs. 1] If nothing at all possesses an intrinsic nature, then your statement [that nothing possesses an intrinsic nature] itself possesses no intrinsic nature, and it cannot refute intrinsic nature.[7]
>
> [Vs. 9] If there is no intrinsic nature, then even the word "no intrinsic nature" (*niḥsvabhāva*) is impossible, because there can be no word without an object [to which it refers] (*nāma hi nirvastukaṃ nāsti*).[8]

In the second part of the work, Nāgārjuna formulates his reply largely in terms of examples.

> [Commentary on verse 22] You have not understood the emptiness of things. . . . If things existed by virtue of their own intrinsic nature, they would exist even without causes and conditions. But they do not. Therefore they have no intrinsic nature, and they are called empty. Similarly, because it is dependently produced, my statement has no intrinsic nature, and because it has no intrinsic nature, it is reasonable to call it empty. Now, things like a cart, a pot, or a cloth, though they are empty of intrinsic nature because they are dependently produced, serve their various functions. For example, they carry wood, grass, or dirt, they contain honey, water, or milk, or they protect from cold, wind, or heat. Similarly, my statement serves to establish the fact that things have no intrinsic nature, even though, because it is dependently produced, it has no intrinsic nature.[9]

Nāgārjuna shows a number of the important characteristics of his method in these passages. The first point to note is that he works out his own account of

words and their function primarily in response to the challenge of a Hindu logician, who wants to force him to say more than he is willing to say. The response he gives is largely negative. He refused to be pushed by the logician into admitting that either his words or the things to which they refer exist by virtue of their intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). The second point has to do with the way words actually function, even though they are empty of intrinsic nature. In fact, Nāgārjuna does not present a positive theory of language to account for the effectiveness of his sentence; he simply makes an appeal to conventional usage. His words admittedly have no intrinsic nature, but they work conventionally as well as does a cart. The cart, when we examine it, has no nature which we can designate as its "cartness," but it still manages to carry out its function effectively. We cannot actually say that Nāgārjuna presents a coherent theory in these lines. In his appeal to ordinary usage, however, Nāgārjuna suggests the direction in which some future Mādhyamika philosopher might go in developing a theory based on pure convention.

If this were all Nāgārjuna had to say about his philosophical statements, our problem would be greatly simplified; but Nāgārjuna recognized that the statement "All things are empty of intrinsic nature" contains an added element of complexity. It purports to convey a general truth about the nature of things: all entities, without exception, are empty of intrinsic nature. If the statement functions this way, however, it raises a number of new difficulties. We might ask, in particular, whether the truth conveyed in this statement has, in Nāgārjuna's terminology, an intrinsic nature. If it does, it renders the statement itself false. If it does not, it is not clear what the statement is meant to convey or how it is meant to convey it. Nāgārjuna actually poses this question for himself in a somewhat different form. He asks whether the statement "All things are empty of intrinsic nature" asserts anything, and if not, what it is understood to do. His explanation is the following:

> [Vs. 29] If I made any assertion (*pratijñā*), I would be in error. But I make no assertion, thus I am not in error.
> [Commentary] If I made any assertion, then the error you describe would be mine. But I make no assertion. How can there be any assertion when all things are empty, completely at peace, and isolated by nature.[10]
>
> [Vs. 63] I do not negate anything, nor is there anything to be negated. Therefore you slander me when you say that I negate something.
> [Commentary] If I negated something, what you say would be correct. But I do not negate anything at all, for there is nothing to be negated. Therefore, when all things are empty and there are no negation and thing to be negated, your statement is slanderous.
>
> [Vs. 64] You may say that something that does not exist can be negated without words. But in this case [in our statement] speech simply makes known that it does not exist; it does not negate it.

> [Commentary] You may say, "Something that does not exist can be negated without words; then what point is there in your statement that all things lack intrinsic nature?" We reply that our statement that all things lack intrinsic nature does not cause all things to have no intrinsic nature; it simply makes known that things lack intrinsic nature. For example, when Devadatta is not in the house, someone might say, "Devadatta is in the house." Someone else might then say to him, "He is not." That statement does not create Devadatta's absence in the house, but only makes known his absence in the house. Similarly, the statement, "Things have no intrinsic nature," does not create the absence of intrinsic nature; it only makes known the absence of intrinsic nature.[11]

Nāgārjuna makes it quite clear here that his statement should not be understood either as an assertion (*pratijñā*) or negation of any positive entity. When pressed to give a positive account of the function of his words, he again appeals to a conventional example to show that, while they do not assert anything, they still have significant effect.

The account of the function of language presented in these passages is, of course only a small part of Nāgārjuna's philosophy, but it can serve to call attention to some of the basic features of his method. First, we have noted that he proceeds only in response to claims made by his opponents, and he refuses to be drawn by their arguments into making positive assertions. In particular, he refuses to accept the notion that the statement "All things are empty of intrinsic nature" functions as an assertion of any positive entity. Second, on the positive side, he argues from conventional usage that the refusal to accept either the intrinsic nature or the assertive value of the statement in no way impairs its ability to function effectively. His words do not assert anything, but they do make known the absence of intrinsic nature. In this way, Nāgārjuna drew the outline of a Mādhyamika account of the function of language. We will see that his successors had great difficulty staying within its limits.

In the four centuries that intervened between Nāgārjuna (*circa* 150 A.D.) and the next Mādhyamika philosopher we will consider, Bhāvaviveka (500–570 A.D.), Indian philosophy underwent a remarkable expansion. The basic texts of the Hindu schools were settled and provided with commentaries, and the earlier dominance of Mādhyamika among the Mahāyāna Buddhist schools came to be challenged by a school of Buddhist idealists and logicians. In the face of this widening doctrinal diversity, Bhāvaviveka seems to have been by temperament and training particularly prey to the attraction of other philosophical opinions. He was apparently a brahman and retained a fondness for the diversity of brahmanical learning, from alchemy and palmistry to Advaita Vedānta, long after his conversion to Buddhism and the philosophical method of Nāgārjuna.[12] A basic motivating impulse in his philosophy, in fact, seems to be the need he felt to reestablish Mādhyamika philosophy in a form that would allow room for the variety of conventional learning. Apart from matters of temperament, however,

there were good logical reasons to reassess Nāgārjuna's handling of some basic questions. The rules of logical debate recorded in the *Nyāya-sūtras* seem to have evolved after Nāgārjuna and partly in response to his methods. This seems particularly evident in the definition of an unacceptable form of reasoning known as *vitaṇḍā* or "cavilling." *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.2.3 defines this as "that [sophistry (*jāti*)] which lacks the establishment of a counter-position."[13] Nāgārjuna, as we have seen, avoided making a positive assertion of anything and did not seem to be concerned that this would violate the rules of debate. Bhāvaviveka, on the other hand, makes a conscious effort in at least two places in his work to meet the objection that he is guilty of *vitaṇḍā* and show that it does not apply.[14] In chapter 3 of the *Tarkajvālā*, for instance, he raises it as an objection.

> [Objection:] Because you do not establish your own position (*svapakṣa*), but only refute your opponent's position (*parapakṣa*), are you not guilty of *vitaṇḍā*? [Reply:] Our position is "emptiness of intrinsic nature" (*svabhāva-śūnyatā*); since this is the nature of things, we are not guilty of *vitaṇḍā*.[15]

Bhāvaviveka manages to deal with the objection but only at serious cost to the integrity of Nāgārjuna's method. He is now willing to admit something Nāgārjuna fought hard to resist: he accepts "emptiness of intrinsic nature" as a positive philosophical assertion. This change has formidable significance for the development of the Mādhyamika accounts of language. Bhāvaviveka's reasons for making this move deserve careful scrutiny.

Before we consider Bhāvaviveka's reasons, however, we need to look again at another aspect of Nāgārjuna's argument. We saw earlier that Nāgārjuna, took some pains to account for the way the words of the sentence "All things are empty of intrinsic nature" could express a significant truth about the nature of things, even though the words themselves were empty and the truth was not the object of an assertion. Those familiar with Mādhyamika philosophy will recognize this distinction as the verbal form of the distinction between two levels of truth. Nāgārjuna says more about this distinction in his commentary on verse 28 of the *Vigrahavyāvartani*.

> We do not say, "All things are empty," without resorting to conventional truth (*vyavahāra-satya*) or by rejecting conventional truth. For it is impossible to teach the Dharma without recourse to conventional truth. As we said [in the *Mādhyamakakārikās*]: "Ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) cannot be taught without resorting to conventional expressions (*vyavahāra*); nirvana cannot be reached without recourse to ultimate truth."[16]

The distinction between ultimate and conventional truth has many implications for Nāgārjuna, particularly in the realm of practical behavior (as might be

inferred from the conventional orientation of a work like Nāgārjuna's *Ratnāvali*).[17] But in the philosophical works, like his *Vigrahavyāvartani*, Nāgārjuna develops the distinction in only a limited way. We might understand ultimate and conventional truth here simply as two sides of the same verbal strategy. Ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) might be understood as that which the statement "All things are empty," acting as a verbal expedient, is meant to convey; but we must remember, of course, that Nāgārjuna resisted any formulation that would turn ultimate truth into the object of a positive assertion. This account of the relation between ultimate and conventional truth is simple and seems to stay close to Nāgārjuna's didactic intent, which was to call attention to the inadequacies and misconceptions hidden in conventional expressions and use them as a vehicle to realize the emptiness of things. Bhāvaviveka took a somewhat more complicated view of the matter.

As we have seen, Bhāvaviveka was inclined temperamentally to include a large variety of contemporary views and practices into his Mādhyamika system; he also wanted to make room for the possibility of positive philosophical assertions. Both these goals would have been hard to realize if he had closely followed Nāgārjuna's method, with its concentration on conventional truth only as a vehicle for the expression of ultimate truth. Bhāvaviveka needed a new form of interpretation, and he found it in a new grammatical analysis of the term *paramārtha*, "ultimate truth." He interpreted *paramārtha* not as ultimate truth itself but as knowledge of ultimate truth.[18] In this way he was able to change *paramārtha* from the content of teaching, which Nāgārjuna discussed purely in linguistic terms, to a realm of experience that could be severed from *vyavahāra*, conventional truth. *Paramārtha* and *vyavahāra* could thus be separated into two realms of existence, each of which had practices and doctrines appropriate only to it. The two were still connected, but less in the lingustic way that Nāgārjuna outlined in the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* than in a temporal and causal way, representing a slow progression from one level to another along the stages of the *bodhisattva* path. Bhāvaviveka explains this process in the third chapter of the *Tarkajvālā*.

> [Vss. 10–11] Ultimate wisdom effects the complete negation of the network of conceptual thought and is motionless moving in the clear sky of ultimate truth (*tattva*), which is peaceful, directly experienced, without concepts or letters, and free from unity and diversity.
>
> [Vss. 12–13] It is impossible to mount the pinnacle of the palace of truth without the ladder of conventional truth. For this reason, the mind, isolated in conventional truth, should become clear about the particular and general characteristics of things.[19]

Bhāvaviveka did not consider the process of climbing through conventional truth to be either easy or quick, as he says in his commentary on these verses. "It

is impossible to climb this palace suddenly. For without ascending the ladder of conventional knowledge for seven countless eons, the completion of the perfections, powers, and super-knowledges is impossible."[20] Progress along the path could be quite leisurely and there was much time along the way to enjoy the subtleties of the conventional world.[21]

By separating *paramārtha* and *vyavahāra* into two different realms of experience in this way, linked only by a gradual progress along the path to perfection, Bhāvaviveka succeeded in the first part of his program. He created a realm of experience in which he could concentrate on the subjects of the conventional world that caught his interest, without having to worry at every moment about applying Nāgārjuna's critique. That part of the Mādhyamika method belonged to the realm of ultimate truth and could be postponed indefinitely while one considered problems in the mundane realm. Bhāvaviveka's fascination with this realm had important consequences for historians of Indian philosophy; his diligence in collecting the details of other philosophical systems provided important evidence for the development of some of the Indian schools.[22] But what was the cost of this rehabilitation of conventional truth? Nāgārjuna achieved great power and simplicity in his philosophical method by treating every question rigorously, as if it were an ultimate question. In doing this he showed that there were no areas of existence that were not subject to the corrosive effect of his critique. By separating a particular realm in which this critique, for practical purposes, did not apply, Bhāvaviveka appears to have damaged the unity of Nāgārjuna's method and engaged in a subtle absolutizing process in which conventional truths are again established in their own right. The full consequences of this process will not be seen until we consider the efforts by Tsoṅ-kha-pa and Candrakīrti to explore its implications, but at least one problem will be apparent when we examine Bhāvaviveka's treatment of his second philosophical concern, the fashioning of positive philosophical assertions.

We saw earlier that Bhāvaviveka was troubled by the accusation that he, as a Mādhyamika philosopher, was guilty of *vitaṇḍā*. Now that we have seen Bhāvaviveka's method for separating the two levels of truth, we are in a position to examine the justification for his peculiar response to this charge. As we saw Bhāvaviveka responded by saying that he, in fact, did maintain a positive position of his own, namely, the emptiness of all things. In the scheme of Bhāvaviveka's separation of the two levels of truth, this claim would be quite reasonable if confined only to the first level; for it was on the conventional level that Bhāvaviveka permitted himself the liberty of investigation into the maze of worldly knowledge. The difficulty is, however, that Bhāvaviveka eventually must bring himself, as a Mādhyamika philosopher, to discuss ultimate truth. This presents him with a dilemma. Does he continue to make his positive assertions into the realm of ultimate, nonconceptual knowledge, or does he confine his assertions to the conventional realm and again risk the charge of being guilty of *vitaṇḍā*—this time on the matters of greatest importance to his philosophical

school? If we look in both of Bhāvaviveka's major works, the *Tarkajvālā* and *Prajñāpradīpa*, we find that he takes a rather ambivalent position on this question.

In the *Prajñāpradipa*, he was writing a commentary on Nāgārjuna's root text, and this fact alone seems to have restrained Bhāvaviveka in his treatment of assertions at the ultimate level. The particular passage of interest on this point is the commentary on verse 18:9 in which Nāgārjuna purports to give a "definition" of ultimate truth. Bhāvaviveka uses this as an opportunity to deal again with the question of *vitaṇḍā*.

> [Objection:] If you think that ultimate truth (*tattva*) can be realized by completely rejecting the intrinsic nature of things which others conceptually construct, then you must state a definition of it. Otherwise you are refuting someone's position without establishing your own; and that is *vitaṇḍā*.
> [Reply:] If the definition of ultimate truth can be expressed, it should be expressed. But it is not an object to be expressed (*abhidheya*). However, in order to give confidence to those who are just beginning, the following is said in terms of conceptual, discriminative knowledge.
> [Vs. 18: 9] Not caused by anything else, peaceful, not expressed by verbal diversity, non-conceptual, not diverse in meaning—this is the definition of ultimate truth (*tattva*).
> [Commentary] Since it is non-conceptual, it is not expressed by verbal diversity. Since it not expressed by verbal diversity, it is in the sphere of non-conceptual knowledge. Since it is in the sphere of non-conceptual knowledge, it is not known by means of anything else. Words do not apply to something that is not known by means of anything else. For this reason, the nature of ultimate truth completely surpasses words. It cannot be an object to be expressed, but the statement which negates both the intrinsic nature and the specific characteristics of all things can make known the nature of ultimate truth. It [the statement] is produced by a superimposition of syllables which conform to the non-conceptual knowledge produced by the method of non-production. Therefore, since ultimate truth, which is actually directly known (*svasamvedya*), is taught here in an expedient way way (*upāya-dvāreṇa*), we do, in fact, express a de-definition of ultimate truth. Thus we are not guilty of *vitaṇḍā*, and your criticism does not apply.[23]

Here, with some equivocation, Bhāvaviveka manages to stay close to Nāgārjuna. He admits that ultimate truth (*tattva*) cannot be directly expressed, but he says that one can, as an expedient, appear to give a definition of it. This, in his opinion, is enough to rebut the charge of *vitaṇḍā*.

In the third chapter of the *Tarkajvālā*, where he lays out his own independent philosophical position, Bhāvaviveka allows himself more liberty with

Nāgārjuna's method. In this chapter he formulates some of the more characteristic elements of his own technique by considering a series of objections to a syllogism of the type (*svatantra-anumaña*) for which his school of Mādhyamika *Svātantrika* is named. The example he uses is a syllogism denying the intrinsic nature of the gross elements. We can formulate the syllogism in four steps:

(1) earth, and so on.
(2) do not have the intrinsic nature of elements, from the point of view of ultimate truth (*paramārthataḥ*),
(3) because they are produced,
(4) like consciousness.

Steps 1 and 2 constitute the assertion (*pratijña*) which Bhāvaviveka uses to deal with the accusation that he is guilty of *vitaṇḍạ*. Step 2, however, raises another difficult question. As the syllogism is formulated in this example, the conclusion belongs not to the realm of conventional truth, where words and concepts are appropriate, but to the realm of ultimate truth. How, then, can Bhāvaviveka allow himself to carry on conceptual thought in the ultimate realm? He deals with this problem in the following surprising way:

> [Objection:] *Paramārtha* transcends all [conceptual] thought, and a negation of the intrinsic nature of things is in the domain of language. For this reason your negation fails.
> [Reply:] *Paramārtha* occurs in two forms. One of them is free from volition, transcendent, pure, and free from verbal diversity. The other is volitional, accords with the accumulation of knowledge and merit clear, and possessed of the verbal diversity known as "worldly knowledge."[24]

Bhāvaviveka's interpretation of the word *paramārtha* allows him to do something that he did not permit himself with the word *tattva* in the passage just quoted from the *Prajñāpradīpa*. He interprets *paramārtha* as a compound meaning "knowledge of ultimate truth." This allowed him earlier to separate it from the experience of conventional truth; here it allows him to separate it into two different levels of experience of the same thing. One level is free from verbal diversity; the other is not. In this way, Bhāvaviveka can maintain that, while ultimate truth (*tattva*) is one, the knowledge of ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) is not. The resulting distinction in levels of experience allows him to carry on positive philosophical activity at the "ultimate" level without being concerned about the fact that such activity involves words and concepts Bhāvaviveka's analysis of the word *paramārtha* is thus a powerful tool in allowing him to carry out his philosophical program. He can maintain nominal adherence to the written text of Nāgārjuna's *Kārikās* and still permit himself to make positive philosophical assertions up to and within the realm of ultimate truth.

Bhāvaviveka can claim a certain amount of success in adapting Nāgārjuna's

method to the requirements of his own philosophical milieu. He gave up Nāgārjuna's prohibition against positive assertions, but he might well claim that this was a minor sacrifice made to keep the rest of Nāgārjuna's critique intact. A more damaging charge against Bhāvaviveka, however, might be that he violated the serious and fundamental prohibition against attributing intrinsic nature either to the words of a statement or to the things to which they refer. Bhāvaviveka did not discuss this point explicitly in either the *Tarkajvālā* or the Pra*jñāpradipa* on anything other than the ultimate level perhaps he was not aware that it would be an issue. In any case, it is sufficient for our purposes in tracing the development of the early theories of language to know that a substantial portion of the Mādhyamika tradition did consider Bhāvaviveka guilty of this more serious charge. Candrakīrti and Tsoṅ-kha-pa both felt that, by establishing conventional truth as an independent realm Bhāvaviveka had violated the most fundamental point of Nāgārjuna's method—he had refuted intrinsic nature on the ultimate level, only to let it back into his account of language on the conventional level.

In sorting out Candrakīrti's arguments against Bhāvaviveka's view of language, we are critically dependent on Tsoṅ-kha-pa's analysis of the issues between them. In the key passage in the *Prasannapadā*, where he attacks the use of *svalakṣaṇa* or "intrinsic identity" on the conventional level, Candrakīrti fails to identify his opponent. This has led Western interpreters to the quite reasonable supposition that the opponent Candrakīrti had in mind was not Bhāvaviveka, who does not explicitly develop *svalakṣaṇa* as a substratum for his use of language, but the Buddhist logicians who do.[25] In the *Legs-bśadsñiṅ-po*, however, Tsoṅ-kha-pa argues on the basis of certain passages in the *Prajñāpradipa* that Bhāvaviveka made a tacit assumption of *svalakṣaṇa* on the conventional level.[26] Candrakīrti actually attacks the common idea that language requires a realistic basis in the world to function effectively. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the argument is meant to oppose any Buddhist who thinks he can analyze language on a conventional level and find any more substantial reality behind it than he does at the ultimate level. That way of thinking is normally associated in Buddhist philosophy with schools like the Vaibhāṣikas or logicians who attempted in varying degrees to give a realistic account of language, but Bhāvaviveka evidently slipped into this pattern as well when he distinguished so sharply between the two levels of truth. On the ultimate level, he maintained the emptiness of all things—although, as we have seen, he still permitted himself some freedom in making ultimate assertions—but on the conventional level he allowed language to function in the manner accepted by the other schools. Tsoṅ-kha-pa explains how widespread he thought this pattern to be.

> What way of thinking assumes that things are established by intrinsic nature (*svalakṣana*)? First, let us speak of the method of the philosophers. In an expression like, "Ths person performed an action and experienced the result," they investigate the meaning of the term "person" (*pudgala*) by asking whether this person is the same as his

> aggregates (*skandhas*) or different. In either case, whether he is the same or different, they can establish the person as the accumulator of *karma*, and so forth. If he cannot be established as either one, then they are not content with "person" as a mere term. In ths way, when the person is established by an investigation into that to which the term refers, the person is established by intrinsic identity. All Buddhist philosophers from Vaibhāṣikas to Svātantrikas hold this view.[27]

The issue between Candrakīrti and Bhāvaviveka, then, as Tsoṅ-kha-pa sees it, is whether it is necessary to reintroduce an element of semantic realism into the conventional realm to anchor the use of language. Candrakīrti contends that this is impossible.

The argument between Candrakīrti and the semantic realists, among whom Tsoṅ-kha-pa includes Bhāvaviveka, hinges on whether it is acceptable in conventional usage to make statements involving a *svalakṣaṇa* or "intrinsic identity" underlying the ordinary use of language. Candrakīrti starts by having the opponent cite examples in an attempt to claim conventional justification for statements of this sort. The opponent says that a statement of the form, "Hardness is the intrinsic identity of earth," is acceptable, even though the intrinsic identity is identical with the earth, because similar expressions are part of conventional usage. For example, one can say, "the body of a statue" or "the head of Rāhu," when the body is no different from the statue, and Rāhu, a demon who has no body, is no different from his head. Candrakīrti puts the opponent's argument this way:

> Even so, even though there is no qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*) apart from the body and head [which are qualified] in the cases, "body of a statue" or "head of Rāhu," there is still a relationship of qualifier and qualified. Similarly, we can say "intrinsic identity of earth" even though there is no earth apart from its intrinsic identity.

Candrakīrti replies:

> This is not so, because the cases are not similar. When the words "body" and "head" normally occur in grammatical connection with companion entities like "hand" or "mind," the thought produced on the basis of the words "body" and "head" alone carries an expectation of the companion entities in the form, "Whose body?" and "Whose head?" Then it is reasonable for someone else, who wants to rule out a connection with a qualifier, to deny such an expectation by using the qualifiers "statue" and "Rāhu" in a conventional way. But when earth is impossible apart from hardness, a relationship of qualifier and qualified is impossible. . . . Furthermore, the terms "statue" and "Rāhu," which are the qualifiers, actually exist as part of conventional usage, and are

> accepted without analysis, as in the conventional designation "person." Therefore your example is incorrect.[28]

There are actually two arguments here, one of which is somewhat stronger than the other. Candrakīrti says first that it is acceptable to qualify one word with a word that refers to the same thing only when there is some possibility of doubt about the fact that they are identical. There can be no doubt, however, that the intrinsic identity is the same as the earth; they are the same by definition. To say "intrinsic identity of earth," then, is to violate conventional usage by using the two terms in a grammatical connection that is appropriate only if there is the possibility that they refer to different things. The second argument is stronger. In this Candrakīrti says simply that "intrinsic identity" itself is an unacceptable term. It is a technical term masquerading as an ordinary word, and it is thus unacceptable as part of conventional usage in any grammatical connection at all.

Candrakīrti's argument is most interesting, perhaps, when he gives his own account of the way language functions on the conventional level. He insists, as Nāgārjuna did, that he does not attempt to destroy the structure of ordinary language, as a semantic realist might suppose, but only to reestablish language on the proper grounds, that is, on pure convention. Candrakīrti outlines this theory in a reply to the further objection that, if his argument is correct, the expression "head of Rāhu" can actually be no more acceptable than "intrinsic identity of earth," since, in both cases, when the objects referred are analyzed, they are found to be identical. His reply is that the matter of "analysis" (*vicāra*) is precisely what distinguishes ultimate from conventional truth. Conventional truth is only established unanalytically. When conventional terms are examined to find their true reference, they are no longer used conventionally. He explains this in the following passage:

> [Objection:] The examples are correct, because only the body [of the statue] and the head [of Rāhu] are actually cognized, since no other entities exist apart from them.
> [Reply:] This is not the case; for such analysis is not carried out in conventional usage, and without such analysis, conventional entities exist. When the *ātman* is analyzed as to whether it is different from [or the same as] matter, etc., it is not possible. But it does exist conventionally (*loka-saṃvṛtyā*) with reference to the *skandhas*. The same is true of Rāhu and the statue. Thus the example is not established. Likewise, in the case of earth, etc., after analysis, there is nothing to be qualified that is different from hardness, etc. [which are the qualifiers], and a qualifier without something to be qualified is groundless. Even so, the masters have maintained that they exist in mutual dependence (*parasparāpekṣā siddhiḥ*) as purely conventional. This must be accepted in just this way. Otherwise, the conventional could not reasonably be distinguished. It would become ultimate truth (*tattva*), not conventional.[29]

The last few lines of this passage show what, in Tsoṅ-kha-pa's view, was the real point of dispute between Candrakīrti and Bhāvaviveka. On one level, it is a dispute over language, but one does not have to go far beneath the surface to find the troublesome issue of two levels of truth. Candrakīrti argues here that the attempt to establish an independent conventional realm, in which it is possible to carry out constructive philosophical reasoning, involves a misunderstanding of the distinction between the two levels. To give substantial reality to the conventional level, even with the laudable intention of promoting philosophical debate, was to transform it into a false ultimate. It was also to misunderstand the point of the discussion about language. To Candrakīrti it was unnecessary to find some substantial reality to which words could refer to acquire their meaning. It was necessary only that they be used the way they are. Whatever meaning they had was acquired by a process of mutual dependence (*parasparāpekṣā siddhi*), with one word depending for its meaning on the network of those that were used before it. In Candrakīrti's view, the move that Bhāvaviveka made on the conventional level was the one that led other Indian philosophers into trouble. It was an attempt to make the technical terms of philosophy into more than conceptual constructions.

The development of the different accounts of language in early Mādhyamika philosophy is a complicated process, involving steps over which individual philosophers often strongly disagreed. Rather than be deterred by this diversity, however, we should accept it as a challenge to greater efforts of understanding. There are still formidable problems to be solved by both historians and comparativists. The peculiar methods of Bhāvaviveka, for instance, need much more thorough study before we can accurately assess his relation to Candrakīrti and the Prāsaṅgika school that has so dominated Western interpretations of Mādhyamika. Mādhyamika philosophy was not monolithic. A greater historical sophistication in understanding the differences between philosophers is an essential element, not only in understanding the philosophers themselves, but in developing true conceptual precision in the act of comparison.

Notes

1 This article is the revised version of a paper first presented at a workshop of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy of the American Philosophical Association, Boston, December 28, 1976.

2 Two particularly useful examples of this kind of study are: Jacques May, "La philosophie bouddhique de la vacuité," *Studia Philosophica* 18 (1958): 123–137; Jan de Jong, "The Problem of the Absolute in the Madhyamaka School," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 2 (1972): 1–6.

3 My use of the phrase "early Mādhyamika" is, of course, somewhat arbitrary. In this article. I will use it to refer to the period in which the major differences between competing subschools were first formulated. This covers the period from the time of Nāgārjuna in the second century A.D. to Candrakīrti in the late sixth or early seventh.

4 The bibliography of Western translations of the works of Nāgārjuna and Candrakirti is well known and need not be recited here. The available works of Buddhapālita and

Bhāvaviveka are perhaps less well known. A partial translation of chapter 2 of Buddhapālita's commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakakārikās* is available in, Musashi Tachikawa, "A Study of Buddhapālita's *Mūlamādhyamakvṛtti*, (1)," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters of Nagoya University* 63 (1974): 1–19. Chapter 1 of Bhāvaviveka's *Prajñāpradipa* is available in, Yuichi Kajiyams, "Bhāvaviveka's *Prajñāpradipa* (1. Kapitel)," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 7 (1963): 37–62 and 8 (1964): 100–130. Portions of Bhāvaviveka's *Mādhyamakahṛdayakārikās* (verses) and *Tarkajvālā* (commentary) have been translated in, V. V. Gokhale, "The Second Chapter of Bhavya's *Mādhyamakahṛdaya* (Taking the Vow of an Ascetic)." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 14 (1972): 40–45: V. V. Gokhale. " 'Masters of Buddhism Adore the Brahman Through Non-adoration' (Bhavya, *Madhyamakahṛdaya*, III)," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 5 (1961–1962): 271–275: V. V. Gokhale, "The Vedānta Philosophy Described by Bhavya in His *Madhyamakahṛdaya*. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 2 (1958): 165–180; Andrė Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhlques IIe partie," *Journal Asiatique* 244 (1950): 167–199; Shotaro Iida, *An Introduction to Svātantrika Mādhyamika*, University of Wisconsin Ph.D. dissertation (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Micro-films, 1968); hereafter cited as Iida, dissertation.

5 See particularly Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamakakārikās* 24: 8–10, found in Louis de la Vallee Poussin, ed., *Mūlamādhyamakakārikās (Madhyamaka Sūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti*, Bibliotheca Buddhica, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg, 1913), pp. 492–494; hereafter cited as *Prasannapadā*.

6 E. H. Johnston and Arnold Kunst, eds., "The *Vigrahavyāvartanī* of Nāgārjuna with the Author's Commentary," *Mėlanges chinois et bouddhique* 9 (1948–1952): 108; hereafter cited as *Vigrahavyāvartanī*.

7 *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, p. 108 (translations are mine unless otherwise noted).

8 *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, p. 115.

9 *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, p. 122.

10 *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, p. 127.

11 *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, pp. 145–147.

12 Iida, dissertation, p. 86.

13 *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.2.3: *sa pratipakṣa-ṣthāpanā-hīno vitaṇḍā*. The text of this *sūtra* with commentaries can be found in Anantalal Thakur, ed., *Nyāyadarśana of Gautama*, Mithila Institute Series. Ancient Text No. 20, vol. 1 (Darbhanga, 1967), p. 628. There has been disagreement over whether the Mādhyamikas were actually accused of *vitaṇḍā*. In a recent article ("Mādhyamika et Vaitaṇḍika," *Journal Ạsiatique* 263 [1975]:99–102), Kamaleswar Bhattacharya argues that Mādhyamikas were not guilty of *vitaṇḍā* according to the strict definition of the term given by the Nyāya commentators. Uddyotakāra, for instance, explains that *vitaṇḍā* means the absence of *proof* (*sthāpanā*) of a counterposition rather than absence of the counterposition itself. In his replies to the accusation of *vitaṇḍā*, however, Bhāvaviveka does not differentiate between *sthāpanā* and *pratipakṣa* in the subtle manner favored by the later commentators. He thought the charge sufficiently applicable to his Mādhyamika method to require serious refutation.

14 See notes 15 and 23 herein.

15 Tibetan text in Iida, dissertation, pp. 109–110 (translation mine unless otherwise noted).

16 *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, p. 127.

17 Giuseppe Tucci, "The *Ratnāvalī* of Nāgārjuna," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1934).

18 Bhāvaviveka gives his grammatical analysis of the term *paramārtha* in both the *Tarkajrālā* and the *Prajñāpradipa*. The appropriate passage from the *Tarkajvālā* is available in Iida, dissertation, pp. 101–102. The following is a translation of a similar

analysis from chapter 24 of the *Prajñāpradipa*. "*Paramārtha* is the 'supreme object' [*karmadhāraya* compound] because it is both supreme (*parama*) and an object (*artha*). Or it is the 'object of the supreme' [*tatpuruṣa* compound] because it is the object of supreme, non-conceptual knowledge. It is defined as 'not realizable through anything else.' Because *paramārṭha* is true, it is 'ultimate truth' (*paramārtha-satya*), and it always, in every way, remains the same. Non-conceptual knowledge, which possesses that as its object by the method of having no object (*viṣayābhāvanayena*), is also *paramārtha* because it is 'that whose object is ultimate' [*balnivrīhi* compound]." Tibetan text in Daisetz T. Suzuki, ed., *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition* (Tokyo-Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1957). vol. 95. p. 246 (folio *Tsha* 286a–b); hereafter cited as *Peking Tripitaka*.

19 Sanskrit text in Iida, dissertation, pp. 82–83.

20 Tibetan text in Iida, dissertation, p. 84.

21 As Bhavaviveka explains in the *Tarkajvālā*, these subtleties included: "grammar (*akṣaraśāstra*), palmistry (*mudrā*), alchemy (?), medical science (*cikitsā*), arithmetic (*gaṇanā*), charms (*mantra*), spells (*vidyā*), etc." (Iida's translation, dissertation, p. 86).

22 This is particularly true for Vedānta, where little other evidence is available from this early period, and for the eighteen schools of Nikāya Buddhism. See V. V. Gokhale, "The Vedānta Philosophy Described by Bhavya in His *Madhyamakahṛdaya*," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 2 (1958): 165–180: André Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sects bouddhiques, IIe partie," *Journal Asiatique* 244 (1950): 167–199.

23 *Peking Tripitaka*, vol. 95, p. 227 (folio *Tsha* 237a–b).

24 Tibetan text in Iida, dissertation, pp. 107–108.

25 Th. Stcherbatsky. *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* (Leningrad, 1927), pp. 149–156.

26 Tsoṅ-kha-pa, *Draṅ-ṅes-legs-bśad-sñiṅ-po* (Varanasi: Gelugpa Students' Welfare Committee, 1973). In all my observations about Tsoṅ-kha-pa, I am indebted to Acarya T. T. Doboom Tulku, who first read this text with me, and to Professor Robert A. F. Thurman, who kindly made available his unpublished translation.

27 *Legs-bśod-sñiṅ-po*, p. 143.

28 *Prasannapadā*, p. 66.

29 *Prasannapadā*, p. 67.

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THE FIVE *KHANDHAS*

Their treatment in the Nikāyas and early Abhidhamma

Rupert Gethin

Source: *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 14 (1986): 35–53.

The five *khandhas* – *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras, viññāṇa* – clearly constitute one of those primary lists of terms that form the basis of much of Buddhist teaching as presented in the Pali Canon. A major *vagga* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* is devoted almost entirely to their treatment,[1] while they also feature repeatedly as categories of analysis in the early *abhidhamma* texts. Yet such accounts of the five *khandhas* as are found in contemporary studies of Indian Buddhism are for the most part of a summary nature, confining themselves to a brief discussion of each of the *khandhas* and the part they play in the breaking down of man into various constituent elements.[2] It does not seem inappropriate in such circumstances to attempt a clearer assessment of the place and understanding of the five *khandhas* in early Buddhist literature.[3]

Although the *khandhas* feature widely in the Pali Canon, they are found most characteristically treated in the *Majjhima*- and *Saṃyutta-nikāyas*, and certain sections of the *abhidhamma* texts. In the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and *Dīghanikāya* they are mentioned really only in passing, while in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* they feature only sporadically, conspicuous by their absence from the section on "fives".[4] When we begin to consider as a whole the body of *nikāya* material concerned with the *khandhas*, what we find is the sequence of terms *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* being treated according to a number of recurring formulae which are interwoven and applied in various contexts. Out of this there gradually emerges a more or less comprehensive account of the five *khandhas*. It is to a consideration of the principal *khandha* formulae that the greater part of this paper is devoted, while reference is also made to the early *abhidhamma* material where this is found to be of help in elucidating the general understanding of the *khandhas* in early Buddhist thought.

The sequence *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras, viññāṇa* is largely taken as given in the *nikāyas*. We find very little in terms of formal explanation of either the sequence as a whole or of the individual terms. What there is, is confined to

a few stock and somewhat terse definitions.[5] But before turning to the *nikāya khandha* formulae, it is perhaps as well to comment briefly on these five basic terms and also, at slightly greater length, on the subject of *khandha* and *upādānakkhandha*.

Rūpa is typically defined as the four elements earth, water, fire and wind, and *rūpa* dependent upon (*upādāya*) them. What is clear, both from the *nikāyas*' elaboration of this by reference to parts of the human body, and from the list of twenty-seven items of *rūpa* distinguished in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, is the extent to which the early Buddhist account of *rūpa* focuses on the physical world as experienced by a sentient being – the terms of reference are decidedly body-endowed-with-consciousness (*saviññāṇaka kāya*).[6] In view of this, the tendency to understand and translate *rūpa* as "matter" is rather misleading.[7] The connotations of the word "matter" in the Western philosophical tradition, its association with concepts such as inert "stuff" or "substance", are hardly appropriate either to the treatment of *rūpa* in the *nikāyas* and early *abhidhamma*, or to *rūpa*'s literal meanings of "form", "shape" or "appearance".

The translation of *vedanā* as "feeling" seems more straightforward, although the *nikāyas'* understanding of *vedanā* is not without its difficulties. It is usually defined as being pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*dukkha*), or not-unpleasant-not-pleasant (*adukkhamasukha*), and is said to be either bodily (*kāyika*) or mental (*cetasika*).[8] The significance of the three kinds of *vedanā* seems to lie in their being seen as three basic reactions to experience which possess a certain potential to influence and govern an individual's subsequent responses in either skilful or unskilful ways.[9]

The stock definition of *saññā* in the *nikāyas* illustrates its function by reference to various colours. It is this, it seems, that has led translators to render *saññā* in the context of the *khandhas* as "perception". Yet, as Alex Wayman has pointed out, there are a number of passages in which the translation "perception" fails to make sense of the *nikāyas'* usage of *saññā* as a technical term. Wayman suggests that it is the word "idea" that should regularly be employed as a translation of *saññā*.[10] This certainly seems to make better sense of the technical usage in connection with the *khandhas*. A *saññā* of, say, "blue" then becomes, not so much a passive awareness of the visual sensation we subsequently agree to call "blue", but rather the active noting of that sensation, and the recognising of it as "blue" – that is, more or less, the idea of "blueness". This appears to be in general how *saññā* is understood in the commentarial literature.[11]

The *nikāyas* define *saṃkhāras* primarily in terms of will or volition (*cetanā*); they also describe them as putting together (*abhisaṃkharonti*) each of the *khandhas* in turn into something that is put-together (*saṃkhata*).[5] In this way *saṃkhāras* are presented as conditioning factors conceived of as active volitional forces. *Cetanā* is, of course, understood as *kamma* on the mental level,[12] and in the early *abhidhamma* texts all those mental factors that are considered to be specifically skilful (*kusala*) or unskilful (*akusala*) fall within the domain of *saṃkhārakkhandha*.[13] Thus it is that the composition of *saṃkhārakkhandha*

leads[14] the way in determining whether a particular arising of consciousness constitutes a skilful or an unskilful *kamma*. All this accords well with the *nikāyas'* singling out of *cetanā* as characteristic of the nature of *saṃkhāras*.

In many *nikāya* passages *viññāṇa* is apparently used generally to characterise the fact of self-awareness of self-consciousness.[15] An interesting section of the *Mahāvedalla-sutta* is devoted to a discussion of the nature of the relationship between *viññāṇa, vedanā* and *saññā*.[16] *Viññāṇa* is here characterised as discriminating (*vijānāti*) the three feelings, *vedanā* as feeling (*vedeti*) the three feelings, and *saññā* as noting (*sañjānāti*) yellow, blue, etc. The passage then goes on to say that these three states (*dhammas*) should be considered closely connected (*saṃsaṭṭha*) since "what one feels, that one notes; what one notes, that one discriminates". Thus *vedanā, saññā* and *viññāṇa* are here apparently viewed as operating together as different aspects of the process of being aware of a particular object of consciousness. *Viññāṇa* can perhaps best be characterised as awareness or consciousness of things in relation to each other; this seems to relate both the notion of self awareness and that of discriminating various objects.

Finally we may note how the *khandha-saṃyutta* explains *vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* each in terms of six classes corresponding to consciousness that is related to the five senses of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, and sixthly mind[5] – that is, the six internal spheres of sense (*saḷāyatana*).

Khandha and upādānakkhandha

Within the *nikāyas* the five terms *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* are variously designated both *khandhas*[17] and *upādānakkhandhas*, and in addition are sometimes treated in sequence without either designation.[18]

A *khandha-saṃyutta* passage states that the *khandhas* are to be considered *upādānakkhandhas* only when they are with *āsavas* (*sāsava*) and subject to grasping (*upādāniya*).[19] In another passage that recurs several times in the *nikāyas*, the question is asked whether *upādāna* should be considered the same as the *upādānakkhandhas* or whether there is *upādāna* apart from them.[20] In reply it is stated that although *upādāna* is not the same as the five *upādānakkhandhas* there is no *upādāna* apart from them; *upādāna* is then defined as "whatever is will and passion (*chandarāga*) in respect of the five *upādānakkhandhas*". Clearly the *nikāyas* understand *upādāna* as some form of attachment that falls within the general compass of the *khandhas*. The early *abhidhamma* texts clarify *upādāna*'s relationship to the *khandhas* under three principal headings: active grasping (*upādāna*), subject to grasping (*upādāniya*), and the product of grasping (*upādiṇṇa*). *Upādāna* as an active force is confined to *saṃkhārakkhandha*, although all five *khandhas* are potentially the objects of *upādāna* – that is, are *upādāniya*; similarly all five *khandhas* are said to be in some measure the products of *upādāna* – that is, *upādiṇṇa*.[21] By following procedures which are adumbrated in the early *abhidhamma* texts, it is possible to detail further *upādāna*'s relationship to the *khandhas*. The text of the

Dhammasaṅgaṇi begins by setting out the triplets and couplets of the *abdidhamma mātikā*, and then by way of explaining the categories of the first triplet goes on to detail the constitution of various arisings of consciousness (*citta*); the categories of the remaining triplets and couplets are explained only in brief. By treating the *cittas* in terms of the categories of the relevant triplets and couplets exactly when and in what measure the three terms *upādāna, upādāniya* and *upādiṇṇa* apply to the *khandhas* might be specified in detail. The early *abhidhamma* texts also state that *rūpakkhandha* is always considered to be with *āsavas* and subject to grasping, and that the only time when the four mental *khandhas* are not such – that is, in *nikāya* teminology, are not *upādānakkhandhas* – is on the occasions of the four *ariya* paths and fruits.[22]

Returning to the immediate problem of how exactly early Buddhist thought conceives of *upādāna*, we find that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* by way of explanation of greed (*lobha*) lists a whole series of terms including passion (*rāga*), craving (*taṇhā*) and *upādāna*.[23] It does not appear that these terms are intended to be understood as mere equivalents either in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* or in the *nikāyas*. Within the *nikāyas* each of these terms is characteristically employed in particular contexts with more or less fixed terms of reference. Thus the *khandhas* are not designated the *lobhakkhandhas* or the *taṇhakkhandhas*, for example. It seems to follow from this that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* intends *rāga, taṇhā* and *upādāna* to be understood as particular manifestations of greed in general.

The usage of the term *upādāna* in Pali seems to involve the association of the following range of ideas: "taking up, "grasping", and hence "feeding", and lastly "food", "fuel" and "basis".[24] Since the term *upādāna* is used in such close association with the *khandha* analysis, and since that analysis is used in the *nikāyas* especially as a way of looking at existence and experience at the level of the apparently stable individual being,[25] the notion of *upādāna* and the significance of its relationship to the *khandhas* can, I think, be summed up as follows. As grasping, *upādāna* is that greed which is the fuel and basis for the manifestation and coming together of the *khandhas* in order that they might constitute a given individual or being. This is, of course, exactly the truth of the arising of *dukkha* (see below). But in particular *upādāna* seems to be seen as greed of a degree and intensity that is able to support the reappearance and coming together of the *khandhas* from one existence to the next. To put it another way, if craving has attained to the degree of *upādāna*, then the reappearance of the *khandhas* in the form of an individual being inevitably follows. This tallies quite precisely with *upādāna's* position in the sequence of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, falling as it does after *vedanā* and *taṇhā*, and before becoming (*bhava*) and birth (*jāti*). Indeed a number of *nikāya khandha* formulae link directly into the *paṭiccasamuppāda* chain at the point of *upādāna*:

> For one who finds pleasure in *rūpa* . . . *vedanā* . . . *saññā* . . . *saṃkhāras* . . . *viññāṇa*, who welcomes them and becomes attached to them, there arises delight (*nandi*); that which is delight in respect of *rūpa* (etc.) is

> *upādāna*; for him dependent on *upādāna* there is becoming, dependent on becoming there is birth, dependent on birth there is old age and death – grief, sorrow, lamentation and despair come into being. Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.[26]

To sum up, the term *upādānakkhandha* signifies the general way in which the *khandhas* are bound up with *upādāna*; the simple *khandha*, universally applicable, is used in the *nikāyas* and especially the *abhidhamma* texts as a neutral term, allowing the specific aspects of, for example, *upādāna's* relationship to the *khandhas* to be elaborated.

(i) The "totality" formula

The totality of each *khandha* is referred to in the *nikāyas* according to the following formula: Whatever *rūpa* ... *vedanā* ... *saññā* ... *saṃkhāras* ... *viññāṇa* are past, future or present, within or without, gross or subtle, inferior or refined, are far or near.[27] The various terms of this formula are not explained further in the *nikāyas*, but the *Vibhaṅga*, which takes this formula as characteristic of the *suttanta* account of the *khandhas*, furnishes us with an illustration of their application to each of the *khandhas* in turn.[28]

Leaving aside the question of the exact understanding of the nature of time in early Buddhist texts, the collective term past (*atīta*), not-come (*anāgata*), just arisen (*paccuppanna*) is straightforward.

The pair within/without (*ajjhattaṃ/bahiddhā*) is explained as relative, having as its point of reference any given individual: one's own *khandhas* are within, while the *khandhas* of other beings are without. Interestingly, when this pair of terms is thus applied to *rūpakkhandha*, inanimate *rūpa* is left unaccounted for,[29] as is recognised by the commentarial appendix to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, which adds that it should be understood as without.[30] This lack of attention to inanimate *rūpa* further illustrates the way in which the analysis of *rūpa* centres around the sentient being. This orientation is, of course, relevant to the *khandha* analysis as a whole.

As far as their application to the four mental *khandhas* is concerned, the remaining pairs of terms are also explained as relative. That is to say, a particular manifestation of *vedanā*, for example, is distinguished as gross or subtle (*oḷārika/sukhuma*), inferior or refined (*hīna/paṇīta*), far or near (*dure/santike*) in relation to another particular manifestation of *vedanā*. The principles according to which the distinctions between gross and subtle etc. are made involve the discernment of increasing degrees of excellence within the compass of the four mental *khandhas*. For example, although in general not-unpleasant-not-pleasant feeling is said to be subtle when compared to pleasant and unpleasant feeling, pleasant feeling occuring in conjuntion with one of the four *ariya* paths or fruits would be subtle in relation to not-unpleasant-not-pleasant feeling occurring in conjunction with the fourth *jhāna* of the form sphere, since the former is without *āsavas* while the latter is with *āsavas*.

As for the application of these pairs of terms to *rūpakkhandha*, although the inferior/refined pair is again treated as merely relative, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga* can be interpreted as taking each part of the two paris gross/subtle and far/near as referring to fixed items in the *abhidhamma* list of twenty-seven kinds of *rūpa*. Yet, as Karunadasa has pointed out, the *Vibhaṅga* should possibly be read as indicating that the far/near pair could be applied in a number of different ways, and moreover the various ancient schools of *abhidharma* are not consistent in the way they interpret the application of these terms to *rūpa*.[31] One is left with the suspicion that in the case of *rūpakkhandha* too these terms were employed in a number of different ways to indicate the variety to be discerned in *rūpa*. Whether or not the details of the *Vibhaṅga* exposition are accepted as valid for the *nikāyas*, it seems clear that this formula is intended to indicate how each *khandha* is to be seen as a class of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety and also a certain hierarchy.

(ii) The khandhas and the Four Noble Truths

It has been usual for scholars to explain the *khandhas* as the analysis of the human individual into psycho-physical phenomena. Yet an expression of the matter in just such terms is not exactly characteristic of the texts. The preferred *nikāya* explanation of the *khandhas* would seem to be in terms of the first of the four noble truths – the *khandhas* are presented as one way of defining what is *dukkha*. The stock *nikāya* statement of the truths explains *dukkha* as "in short the five *upādānakkhandhas*".[32] What is interesting is the way in which various terms are substituted for *dukkha*. For example, we find in the *khandha-saṃyutta*:

> I will teach you, *bhikkhus, sakkāya* (the existing body), its arising, its ceasing, and the way leading to its ceasing. And what, *bhikkhus*, is *sakkāya*? The five *upādānakkhandhas* should be said.[33]

The well known "burden" *sutta* is also in principle a variation on the four-truth theme. The burden (*bhāra*) is explained as the five *upādānakkhandhas* in accordance with its standing for *dukkha*, while clinging to the burden (*bhārādāna*) and laying down the burden (*bhāranikkhepana*) are explained according to the standard definitions of the second and third truths respectively. The troublesome taking up of the burden (*bhārahāra*), defined as the person (*puggala*), is inserted between the first and the second truths, while the fourth truth is ommitted altogether; thus the usual pattern is departed from.[34]

Another frequently quoted *nikāya* statement that follows the structure of the four truths substitutes world (*loka*) for *dukkha*:

> In this fathom-long body endowed with sentience and mind, I declare the world, its arising, its ceasing and the way leading to its ceasing.[35]

In addition, we find *dukkha* as the first truth defined, not in terms of the five *upādānakkhandhas*, but in terms of the six internal spheres of sense (*ajjhattika āyatana*).

Within this general context can be placed the verse attributed to the nun Vajira and referred to in the *Milindapañha*.[37] This states that just as the word "chariot" is applied to what is really a sum of parts, a being (*satta*) is the conventional designation (*sammuti*) for the *khandhas*; there is, in fact, just *dukkha*. A *khandha-saṃyutta* play on the word *satta* finds a hidden significance in this explanation:

> "A being" (*satta*) is said; in what measure is "a being" said? Whatever is will, passion, delight and craving in respect of *rūpa* ... *vedanā* ... *saññā* ... *saṃkhāras* ... *viññāṇa* is being attached (*satta*) thereto, is being strongly attached (*visatta*) thereto; for this reason "a being" is said.[38]

What begins to emerge, then, is a series of correspondences: *dukkha*, the five *upādānakkhandhas, sakkāya, bhāra, loka*, the six internal *āyatanas, satta*. All these expressions apparently represent different ways of characterising the given data of experience or conditioned existence, and are also seen as drawing attention to the structure and the sustaining forces behind it all. In this way the *khandhas* begin to take on something of a wider significance than is perhaps appreciated when they are seen merely as a breaking down of the human individual into constituent parts.

By way of expanding on the theme of the *khandhas* as *dukkha*, a whole series of designations is applied to them both collectively and individually. Most frequent in this respect is the standard sequence of *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā* (see below). To this a fourth term, *saṃkhata* (conditioned), and also a fifth, *vadhaka* (murderous), are occasionally added.[39] One treatment describes each *khandha* in turn as, in addition to *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā, roga* (sickness), *gaṇḍa* (a boil), *salla* (a barb), *agha* (misery), *ābādha* (an affliction), *para* (other), *paloka* (unstable), *suñña* (empty).[40] The *khandhas* are also called embers (*kukkuḷa*); they are on fire (*āditta*); they are Māra, and by grasping them one is bound to Māra.[41] All this acts as vivid illustration of the danger inherent in attachment to the *khandhas*. Images of disease, bodily affliction and burning abound in the *nikāyas*; the effect in the present context is one of alluding to and drawing together various *nikāya* passages.

Formulae which may be considered as adaptations of the four-noble-truth structure are used to take up the theme of the *khandhas* as *dhammas* that are to be fully understood (*pariññeyya*).[42] Thus ignorance (*avijjā*) is defined as not knowing in turn *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras, viññāṇa*, their arising, their ceasing and the way leading to their ceasing; conversely knowledge is knowing all of these.[43] In similar vein is the formula that runs: Thus is *rūpa* (etc.), thus is its arising (*samudaya*), thus is its passing away (*atthagama*). This is one of the

most frequently occuring *nikāya khandha* formulae, and is usually found as an explanation of the expression, "he dwells contemplating the rise and fall of the five *upādānakkhandhas*" – an expression used especially in contexts where the process of the gaining of that insight that constitutes the destruction of the *āsavas* is being described.[44]

The theme of the arising and passing away of the *khandhas* is interwoven in a cycle of *khandha-saṃyutta suttas* with that of their pleasure (*assāda*), their danger (*ādīnava*) and the escape from them (*nissaraṇa*); this apparently brings together all the various aspects which make for the full understanding of the nature of the *khandhas*.[45]

(iii) The anicca-dukkha-anattā formula

Perhaps the most well known of the *khandha* formulae is that which demonstrates *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* in turn as *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā*. In its fullest form this treatment of the *khandhas* is found in the *Vinaya-piṭaka* placed as a second utterance after the Benares discourse on the four noble truths.[46] At its core is a series of questions and answers in the following pattern:

> What do you think, is *rūpa* (etc.) permanent or impermanent? Impermanent. That which is impermanent, is that suffering or happiness? Suffering. Is it right to regard that which is suffering, of a changeable nature, as "This is mine, I am this, this is my self (*attā*)"? No.

This series of questions and answers, applied to *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa*, occurs regularly throughout the *khandha-saṃyutta* and also elsewhere in the *nikāyas*.[47] Significantly, as a method of demonstrating *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā* the formula's use is not confined to the five *khandhas*, but is also applied by the *nikāyas* to a whole series of categories. In the *Cūḷa-Rāhulovāda-sutta* we find it applied to eye, visible forms, eye-contact and to "what is connected with *vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* and arises dependent upon eye-contact"; ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are all treated in a parallel fashion.[48] The *sutta* thus understands thirty consecutive rehearsals of the formula. The *saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* also employs this formula in respect of a similar list of categories.[49] The *Rāhulasaṃyutta* treats a total of fifty-nine categories in this manner: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; the six corresponding kinds of object; six corresponding classes each of *viññāṇa, samphassa, vedanā, saññā, sañcetanā* and *taṇhā*; six elements (*dhātu*), namely earth, fire, wind, water, consciousness, and space; finally the five *khandhas*.[50] Bearing in mind that the six classes of *vedanā, saññā, sañcetanā* and *viññāṇa* are also used to explain the appropriate *khandhas*, it is apparent that the *khandhas* feature widely in this exhaustive treatment apart from their appearance at its close. One is tempted to suggest that this seemingly repetitive list conveys a certain move-

ment from the particular to the more general along the following lines. According to its *nikāya* definition, eye, visible forms and eye-consciousness together constitute eye-contact – similarly for the other senses. Dependent upon sense contact there arises subsequent *vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa*. The significance of the appearance of the *khandha* sequence at the close of the *Rāhula-saṃyutta* list seems to lie in the fact that it is seen as integrating and sythesising what comes before into a whole – a whole that is still, however, *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā*.

(iv) Attā, anattā and sakkāyadiṭṭhi

The conclusion that the *anicca-dukkha-anattā* formula focuses upon is that each of the *khandhas* is to be seen by right wisdom as it really is: "This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my *attā*." It is the attainment of this vision that distinguishes the *ariya sāvaka* (noble hearer) from the *assutavant puthujjana* (ignorant ordinary man).[51] A fourfold formula applied to each of the *khandhas* in turn indicates twenty ways in which the *puthujjana* falls short of this vision: he views *rūpa* (etc.) as the *attā*, the *attā* as possessing *rūpa* (etc.), *rūpa* (etc.) as in the *attā*, the *attā* as in *rūpa* (etc.).[52] In both the *nikāyas* and the *abhidhamma* texts these twenty ways of viewing the *attā* in relation to the *khandhas* are used to explain in detail *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* (the view that the body is real).[53] No doubt they are seen as operating at various levels in the psyche of the *puthujjana*, yet that they are seen as having a particular relevance to notions of the *attā* associated with various meditation attainments seems likely, given the importance of such concerns in the *nikāya* context. Thus a passage that occurs several times in the *nikāyas* treats the four *jhānas* and the first three formless attainments successively, stating that whatever there is connected with *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* at those levels is to be seen as (amongst other things) *anattā*.[54] This is said to result either in the destruction of the *āsavas*, i.e. arahatship, or in the abandoning of the five lower fetters (*orambhāgiya saṃyojana*), i.e. the attainment of nonreturnership. *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is, of course, counted among these five lower fetters.

That the abandoning of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* does not of itself involve the complete destruction of the *āsavas* is a point taken up in a *khandha-saṃyutta* discourse[55] in which the venerable Khemaka is asked by a number of *theras* whether or not he views anything as *attā* or as belonging to the *attā* in respect of the five *upādānakkhandhas*. Khemaka replies that he does not; he is, however, not an arahat since the general notion "I am" still persists within the compass of the *khandhas*, although it does not take the form of a specific view, "I am this". He concludes, "when the five lower fetters have been abandoned . . . there yet remains a residuum of the conceit 'I am', of the desire 'I am', of the tendency 'I am'."

The abandoning of the twenty modes of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is, then, a central element in the transition from *puthujjana* to *ariya sāvaka*. Any sense of

individual existence that subsequently persists, is of too subtle a nature to act as the basis for a definite view which might identify the *attā* with all five *khandhas* or any one of them.

The formula of the twenty modes of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is also employed in the *nikāyas* to explain in detail the statement that, "whatever *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* view the *attā* in diverse ways, they all view the five *upādāna-kkhandhas* or one of them".[56] In other words, there can be no specific views concerning the *attā* apart from the twenty ways of viewing the *attā* in relation to the five *khandhas*. Now, a number of scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the *nikāyas* fail to categorically deny the *attā* and declare only that the *khandhas* are *anattā*.[57] Yet, when this is taken in the context of the former statement, it must be added that the *nikāyas* refuse to allow the *attā* as a meaningful concept apart from the five *khandhas*, that is apart from views or notions of the *attā* that are ultimately to be abandoned. The *attā* is in this way squeezed out to the *nikāyas*' ultimate frame of reference, and deliberately confined to the level of speculations and views. This can be seen, up to a point, as a challenge to those *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* who maintained views concerning the *attā* to explain the exact nature of that *attā*. Their response seems to have been to accuse the Buddha of declaring the destruction of the existing being, or to demand an answer to the question of whether or not the Tathāgata exists after death. The Tathāgata is untraceable (*ananuvejja*), the question of his existence or not after death is unexplained (*avyākata*), was the reply.[58]

(v) The arising of dukkha: the khandhas as paṭiccasamuppanna

Precisely because the *puthujjana* views the *khandhas* as his *attā*, and is attached to them through the workings of "will, passion, delight, craving, and that clinging and grasping which are determinations, biases and tendencies of mind",[59] there arises for him "grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair". The *nikāyas* thus convey a picture of a complete spectrum and network of attachment, and, as indicated above in the course of the discussion of *upādāna*, a number of *khandha* treatments link directly into the *paṭiccasamuppaāda* chain. The continued manifestation of the *khandhas* is thus presented as the direct consequence of attachment in respect of the *khandhas*.

In addition to this kind of treatment, which has as its scale a lifetime or a series of lifetimes, a number of *nikāya* passages focus attention on the process of the arising of the *khandhas* in the context of a given sequence of consciousness. A section of the *Mahāhatthipadopamā-sutta* describes the case of one who knows that there is nothing in respect of *rūpa* of which he can say "I" or "mine" or "I am".[60] If he is insulted by others, he knows, "There has arisen for me this unpleasant *vedanā* born of ear-contact; it is caused (*paṭicca*), not uncaused (*appaṭicca*)." He is thus said to see that contact (*phassa*) is *anicca*, that *vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* are *anicca*. The *sutta* goes on to state that a manifestation (*pātubhāva*) in any section of consciousness (*viññāṇabhāga*) is to be

considered as the result of three conditions, namely that the appropriate bodily organ – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind – is intact (*aparibhiṇṇa*), that corresponding external objects – visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles or mental states – come within its range (*āpātha*), and finally that there is an appropriate bringing together (*samannāhāra*).[61] When these conditions are fulfilled "whatever *rūpa* that thus comes into being is included (*saṃgahaṃ gacchati*) in *rūpupādānakkhandha*"; likewise for *vedanā* and *vedanupādānakkhandha*, and so on. The *sutta* understands all this as illustrating *paṭiccasamuppāda*, and comments that what is causally arisen (*paṭiccasamuppanna*) is the five *vpādānakkhandhas*.

This kind of treatment, then, considers the arising of the *khandhas* dependent on any one of the six internal sense spheres. The sequence of terms that thus emerges – (*rūpa*), *phassa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras, viññāṇa* – parallels the initial pentad of *dhammas* that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* lists for the arising of each consciousness, namely *phassa, vedanā, saññā, cetanā, citta*,[62] and invites a certain comparison. The precise nature of the time scale of the consciousness process envisaged by the *nikāya* treatment is ambiguous – perhaps intentionally so, while the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* apparently reduces the scale to its base unit: the individual arising of *citta* at any given time (*samaya*).[63] Yet what is common to both the *suttanta* and *abhidhamma* material here is the concern to consider how the *khandhas* or how *dhammas* stand in relationship to each other, how they are conditioned and sustained within a particular consciousness sequence, however that might be conceived.

The khandha-vibhaṅga

The *khandha-vibhaṅga* is the first of the eighteen chapters that make up the *Vibhaṅga*. It is divided into three sections, the first of which, dealing with the *suttanta* treatment of the *khandhas*, has already been referred to above. The second section, the *abhidhamma-bhājaniya*,[64] involves the analysis of the totality of each of the five *khandhas* in turn according to how each is, in the first place, a whole, and then how each is divisible into two kinds, three kinds, four kinds and so on. This procedure is taken as far as an elevenfold division in the case of *rūpakkhandha*, and as far as a tenfold division in the case of the other *khandhas*, although for the latter the text subsequently goes on to indicate additional ways of sevenfold, twenty-fourfold, thirtyfold and manifold division. The bulk of the section is taken up with the application of the relevant triplets and couplets from the *abhidhamma mātikā* to each of the four mental *khandhas*; this provides a whole series of ways of threefold and twofold division. By taking each applicable triplet with each applicable couplet in turn, according to all possible permutations, the *Vibhaṅga* indicates in the region of one thousand different sets of divisions for each of these four *khandhas* – the precise number varying according to the number of triplets and couplets relevant in each case.

The final section of the *khandha-vibhaṅga*, the *pañhāpucchaka*, takes the

form of a series of questions and answers, again concerned with how the *khandhas* relate to the *abhidhamma* triplets and couplets, and as such forms an extension to the *abhidhamma-bhājaniya* treatment.

The emphasis in the *khandha-vibhaṅga* is once again on the complexity and manifold nature of the *khandhas*. In addition, taken in conjunction with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* analysis of the various individual arisings of *citta* in terms of the triplets and couplets, the *khandha-vibhaṅga* provides a comprehensive method of classification by which any given conditioned *dhamma* can be classed as *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* or *viññāṇa*, and can be precisely analysed and assessed within the whole scheme of *abhidhamma* and the Buddhist path.

Khandha-āyatana-dhātu

For the *abhidhamma* texts such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi, Vibhaṅga* and *Dhātukathā* the *khandhas* form one of the primary category headings by means of which *dhammas* may be classified. Along with the twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*, the five *khandhas* constitute a triad among these *abhidhamma* headings in that they represent three different methods of classifying the totality of *dhammas* that make up conditioned existence. However, unlike the *khandhas*, the *āyatanas* and *dhātus* also take into account the unconditioned, *nibbāna*.[65] The other headings employed in the *abhidhamma* texts relate, for the most part, to the more specific aspects of Buddhist spiritual practice, for example the *indriyas*, the limbs of *jhāna* and the eightfold path, and so on.

As an indication of the importance of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad in early Buddhism, it is worth nothing a phrase repeated several times in the verses of the *Khuddaka-nikāya*: He/she taught me *dhamma* – the *khandhas*, *āyatanas* and *dhātus*.[66] Yet when we turn to the four primary *nikāyas*, although the twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus* are specifically mentioned in one or two places,[67] it is significant that the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* fails to provide three corresponding treatments of the *khandhas, āyatanas* and *dhātus* as might have been expected. What we do find in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* are the *khandha-saṃyutta* and the *saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* – two exhaustive treatments, each running to some two hundred pages in the PTS editions and each dominating its respective *vagga*. A much slighter *dhātu-saṃyutta*, found in the second *vagga* (which is dominated by the treatment of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula), in fact concerns itself with the eighteen *dhātus* only briefly at its opening, being for the most part devoted to the treatment of the various other items also sometimes termed *dhātus* in the *nikāyas*.[68] On closer examination the *saḷāyatana-saṃyutta*, for its part, does not strictly constitute a treatment of the twelve *āyatanas*, but seems rather to represent an approach which is relevant to analysis, from the point of view of *abhidhamma*, by both *āyatana* and *dhātu*.

All this suggests that the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad is not standard in quite the same way for the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* as it is for the early *abhidhamma* texts.

Whether this is best understood as reflecting a difference in the respective concerns of the *nikāya* and *abhidhamma* texts, or whether it indicates that this triad evolved as standard only after the composition of the bulk of the *nikāya* material, is a question that goes beyond and scope of the present paper. Whatever the case, as A. K. Warder has pointed out,[69] the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad is common to all schools of Buddhism, and is not something confined to the Theravādin *abhidhamma*.

Conclusion

To explain the *khandhas* as the Buddhist analysis of man, as has been the tendency of contemporary scholars, may not be incorrect as far as it goes, yet it is to fix upon one facet of the treatment of the *khandhas* at the expense of others. Thus A. B. Keith could write, "By a division which . . . has certainly no merit, logical or psychological, the individual is divided into five aggregates or groups."[70] However, the five *khandhas*, as treated in the *nikāyas* and early *abhidhamma*, do not exactly take on the character of a formal theory of the nature of man. The concern is not so much the presentation of an analysis of man as object, but rather the understanding of the nature of conditioned existence from the point of view of the experiencing subject. Thus at the most general level *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* are presented as five aspects of an individual being's experience of the world; each *khandha* is seen as representing a complex class of phenomena that is continuously arising and falling away in response to processes of consciousness based on the six spheres of sense. They thus become the five *upādānakkhandhas*, encompassing both grasping and all that is grasped. As the *upādānakkhandhas* these five classes of states acquire a momentum, and continue to manifest and come together at the level of individual being from one existence to the next. For any given individual there are, then, only these five *upādānakkhandhas* – they define the limits of his world, they are his world. This subjective orientation of the *khandhas* seems to arise out of the simple fact that, for the *nikāyas*, this is how the world is experienced; that is to say, it is not seen primarily as having metaphysical significance.

Accounts of experience and the phenomena of existence are complex in the early Buddhist texts; the subject is one that is tackled from different angles and perspectives. The treatment of *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* represents one perspective, the treatment of the six spheres of sense is another.[71] As we have seen, in the *nikāya* formulae the two merge, complementing each other in the task of exposing the complex network of conditions that is, for the *nikāyas*, existence. In the early *abhidhamma* texts *khandha, āyatana* and *dhātu* equally become complementary methods of analysing, in detail, the nature of conditioned existence.

The approach adopted above has been to consider the treatment of the five *khandhas* in the *nikāyas* and early *abhidhamma* texts as a more or less coherent whole. This has incidentally revealed something of the underlying structure and

dynamic of early Buddhist teaching – an aspect of the texts that has not, it seems, either been clearly appreciated or properly understood, and one that warrants further consideration.

Notes

Acknowledgement is due to L.S. Cousins for advice and criticism. Abbreviations of Pali texts are those of *A Critical Pali Dictionary, Epilegomena to Vol. I*, Copenhagen, 1948.

1 The *Khandha-vagga* (S III): *khandha-saṃyutta*, S III 1–188, followed by the *Rādhasaṃyutta*, S III 188–200, which also treats the *khandhas* in all its *suttas*.

2 E.g. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psychology*, London, 1914, pp. 39–56; A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1923, p. 85; E. Conze, *Buddhism – Its Essence and Development*, 2nd pbk ed., Oxford, 1974, p. 14; N. Smart, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*, London, 1964, pp. 42–5; T. O. Ling, *A History of Religion East and West*, London, 1968, pp. 86–7, 131. Fuller discussions seem to be lacking, although some further details may be gleaned from the following: K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme Ancien*, Paris, 1973, pp. 109–10, and '*Upàdhi, upādi* et *upādāna*', *Mėlanges d'indianisme à la mėmoire de Louis Renou* Paris, 1968, pp. 81–95; Bhikkhu Bodhi, '*Khandha* and *Upādānakkhandha*', *Pali Buddhist Review*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1976, pp. 91–102; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, passim; E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Louvain, 1958, passim, and *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, Vol. IV, pp. 1995–2042; A. O. Lovejoy,' The Buddhist technical terms *upādāna* and *upādisesa*', JAOS, XIX, 1897, pp. 126–36; A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 2nd ed., Delhi, 1982, passim.

3 The principal sources are the four primary *nikāyas* (D, M, S, A) with the first three works of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* (Dhs, Vibh, Dhātuk) taken as representative of the early *abhidhamma*.

4 Twenty-four M suttas contain some reference to the *khandhas*. They are also mentioned at Vin I 10 (=S V 420) and Vin I 12 (=S III 66), and at D II 35, 301, 305, 307; A. K. Warder, *op. cit.* p. 86, notes that Chinese versions of the (*Mahā-*)*Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* omit the references to the *khandhas*; the *khandhas* are also found in various contexts in the summaries of *nikāya* teaching that constitute the *Saṅgīti-* and *Dasuttara-suttas*: D III 223, 233, 278, 286.

5 E.g. *khandha-saṃyutta* definitions, S III 59–60, 86–7.

6 Cf. the following passages: M I 185–90, S III 86, Dhs 134–46.

7 Taken for granted and left largely unquestioned in Y. Karunadasa's study, *The Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, Colombo. 1967.

8 M I 303.

9 See in general the *vedanā-saṃyutta*, especially S IV 209, 231; cf. also C. Gudmunsen, *Wittgenstein and Buddhism*, London, 1977, pp. 12–4.

10 A. Wayman, 'Regarding the Translation of the Buddhist Technical Terms *saññā/saṃjñā, viññāṇa/vijñāna*', *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume*, ed. O. H. de A. Wijesekera, Colombo, 1976, pp. 324–36.

11 Vism XIV 130; cf. Nyanapoika, *Abhidhamma Studies*, Kandy, 3rd ed. 1971, pp. 68–72.

12 A III 415.

13 This is most simply expressed at Dhātuk 9 where the truth of arising and the truth of the path are said to be *saṃkhārakkhandha*; it is elaborated at Dhs 185–225, and at Vibh 63–9 where the various categories of unskillful *dhammas* are treated in terms of the *khandhas*.

14 Cf. Vism XIV 135.
15 Cf. S II 94–5, III 9–10, IV 195.
16 M I 292–3.
17 The primary meaning of Pali *khandha* (=Skt. *skandha*) would seem to be the trunk of a tree, and then the shoulder or back of a man or an animal. In the Pali Canon the word is also regularly used in a number of expressions in the sense of an accumulation or collection of something, e.g. *bhogakkhandha, puññakkhandha, dukkhakkhandha*, and often apparently indicating a division or grouping of some kind, cf. *sīlakkhandha, samādhikkhandha, paññakkhandha* (e.g. D I 206).
18 For the three types of reference: (i) e.g. M I 138, S III 66, Dhs, Vibh, Dhātuk passim; (ii) e.g. D III 233, 278, M III 16, S III 26, 83; (iii) e.g. D II 35. Also to be noted are the occurrences of the forms *rūpadhātu, vedanādhātu* etc. (e.g. S III 9), and on one occasion in verse of the sequence *rūpa, vedayita, saññā, viññāṇa, saṃkhata* (S I 112), cf. note 34 below.
19 S III 47.
20 M I 299 – S III 100–1; cf. S III 166–7.
21 Four *khandhas* are not *upādāna, saṃkhārakkhandha* may or may not be; *rūpakkhandha* is *upādāniya*, four *khandhas* may or may not be; all five *khandhas* may or may not be *upādiṇṇa*, Vibh 67.
22 Dhs 196, 246. The *abhidhamma* view that *rūpakkhandha* is always *sāsava*, while the other four may or may not be, seems to be paralleled in a *nikāya* passage which first considers how body (*kāya*) and mind (*citta*) are diseased (*atura*), and then how body is diseased but mind is not, S III 3–5.
23 Dhs 189.
24 See *upādāna*, PTS *Pali-English Dictionary* and *A Critical Pali Dictionary*.
25 This is perhaps most simply summed up in the *nikāya* usage of such expressions as "the manifestation of the *khandhas*" and "the breaking up of the *khandhas*" in part definition of birth and death respectively, usually in the context of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula, e.g. M I 49, 50.
26 S III 14; cf. M I 511, S III 94.
27 E.g. M I 138–9, III 16–7, S III 47, 68.
28 The *khandha-vibhaṅga, suttanta-bhājaniya*, Vibh 1–12.
29 Presumably because the terms *ajjhattaṃ* and *bahiddhā* are used in the *nikāyas* in the context of "all *rūpa*" (e.g. M I 138), Karunadasa suggests that the two terms are not being used relatively, as in the *abhidhamma* texts, but rather to establish the dichotomy between "matter that constitutes the body of a living being and the matter that obtains outside of it" (*op. cit.* p. 116), but clearly this dichotomy cannot apply in the cases of *vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa*.
30 Dhs 241.
31 Karunadasa, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–9.
32 Vin I 10 = S V 420, D II 305, M I 48, S III 158.
33 S III 159, M I 299.
34 S III 25; this is to some extent explained if the *sutta* is viewed as an exposition of the accompanying verse – that statements in verse should not always conform to the patterns of *sutta* prose is not surprising.
35 S I 62, A II 48.
36 S V 426.
37 S I 135, Mil 28.
38 S III 190.
39 S III 56, 114.
40 E.g. S III 167–8.
41 See S III 177, 71, 194, 198, 74.

42 D III 278, S III 26, Vibh 426.
43 S III 162–3.
44 E.g. D. II 35, M III 115, S III 152.
45 S III 13–5, 27–31, 61–5, 81–2, 160–1, 173–6. Cf. the recurring refrain found in the *Brahmajāla-sutta*: The Tathāgata is freed without grasping "having known as they really are the arising of feelings, their passing away, their pleasure, their danger and the escape from them." D 117–38, passim.
46 Vin I 12–3 = S III 66–8.
47 E.g. S III 56, 88, 104–5, 187–8, M I 138, 232–4, S II 125, 249.
48 M III 277–80.
50 S II 244–9.
51 S III 18–9; cf. S III 16.
52 E. g. M III 188, 227, S III 3, 16, 96.
53 M I 300, III 17–8, S III 102, Dhs 182.
54 M I 436, A V 422, cf. 128.
55 S III 125–33.
56 S III 63.
57 E.g. E. Conze, *op. cit.*, p. 39, and E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, London, 1933, p. 101, n. 2.
58 M I 140, S III 119; cf. S III 124, where Māra searches in vain for the consciousness of a *bhikkhu* who has just attained arahatship and then died. The most extensive treatment of this aspect of the *khandhas* is found in the *avyākata-saṃyutta*, S IV 374–403. On this whole question cf. S. Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 117–38.
59 S III 13, cf. 7, 18.
60 M I 185–6.
61 M I 190–1.
62 Dhs 9.
63 See Nyanaponika, *op. cit.*, pp. 104–26.
64 Vibh 12–69.
65 Dhātuk 9.
66 Ap 563, cf. 42; Thī 43, 69, 103; cf. Th 1255, Nidd I 45.
67 E.g. D II 302 (six internal and external *āyatanas*), M III 62 (eighteen *dhātus*).
68 *Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta*, S IV 1–204; *dhātu-saṃyutta*, S II 140–77.
69 'The Mātikā', introducory essay to the *Mohavicchedanī*, London, 1961, p. xx.
70 A. B. Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
71 As additional ways of analysing the whole of experience, cf. *nāma-rūpa* (e.g. D I 223) and *diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññāta* (e.g. M I 3, 135).

53

BHAVANGA AND REBIRTH ACCORDING TO THE ABHIDHAMMA

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Source: Tadeusz Skorupski and Ulrich Pagel (eds) (1994) *The Buddhist Forum: Vol. III*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, pp. 11–35.

The bare notion of *bhavaṅga* consciousness is not unfamiliar to students of Theravāda Buddhism. It has been discussed briefly by a number of writers over the years. However, as with many other basic conceptions of Buddhist thought, if one searches for a straightforward account of just what is said in the Pāli sources, one soon discovers that what is written in the secondary sources is inadequate, sometimes contradictory and certainly incomplete.[1] Existing discussions of *bhavaṅga* largely confine themselves to the way *bhavaṅga* functions in the Abhidhamma theory of the process of consciousness (*citta-vīthi*). It is pointed out how *bhavaṅga* is the state in which the mind is said to rest when no active consciousness process is occurring: thus *bhavaṅga* is one's state of mind when nothing appears to be going on, such as when one is in a state of deep dreamless sleep, and also momentarily between each active consciousness process. This is about as far as one can go before running into problems.

One might be tempted to say that *bhavaṅga* is the Abhidhamma term for "unconsciousness" or for "unconscious" states of mind, but the use of such expressions in order to elucidate this technical Abhidhamma term turns out to be rather unhelpful, not to say confusing. Their English usage is at once too imprecise and too specific. For example, ordinary usage would presumably define as "unconscious" the state of one who is asleep (whether dreaming or not), who is in a coma, who has fainted, or who has been "knocked unconscious", etc. But it is not clear that Abhidhamma usage would necessarily uniformly apply the term *bhavaṅga* to these conditions, in fact it is clear that in one instance—the instance of one who is asleep but dreaming—it would not (see below). Thus if *bhavaṅga* is to be understood as "unconsciousness", it must be as a specific kind of unconsciousness. Furthermore, it is surely stretching the use of ordinary language to say that someone who is "conscious" is "unconscious" between every thought. But if the expressions "unconsciousness" and "unconscious" are sometimes

vague in their usage, they become even more problematic in the present context as a result of their association with certain quite specific modern psychoanalytic theories of the "unconscious".

Partially reflecting this specific association of the "psychoanalytic unconscious" on the one hand and the somewhat vague "state of unconsciousness" on the other, discussions of *bhavaṅga* have tended in one of two alternative directions: they have either tended to see *bhavaṅga* as something akin to the contemporary idea of the unconscious; or they have tended to see *bhavaṅga* as a kind of mental blank. As an example of the first tendency, Nyanatiloka writes of *bhavaṅga* in the following terms:

> "Herein since time immemorial, all impressions and experiences are, as it were, stored up or, better said, are functioning but concealed as such to full consciousness from where however they occasionally emerge as sub-conscious phenomena and approach the threshold of full consciousness."[2]

Other more recent writers, such as Steven Collins and Paul Griffiths, convey the impression that *bhavaṅga* is to be understood as a kind of blank, empty state of mind—a type of consciousness that has no content.[3] For Collins *bhavaṅga* is a kind of logical "stop-gap" that ties together what would otherwise be disparate consciousness processes (and disparate lives):

> "In the cases of the process of death and rebirth, of the ordinary processes of perception, and of deep sleep, the *bhavaṅga* functions quite literally as a 'stop-gap' in the sequence of moments which constitutes mental continuity."[4]

He goes on to suggest that modern Theravāda Buddhist writers such as Nyanatiloka who apparently understand *bhavaṅga* as something akin to a psychoanalytic concept of the "unconscious" have entered the realm of creative Buddhist psychology; the ancient literature, says Collins, does not support such an understanding.[5] The writers cited by Collins do not generally explicitly invoke the concept of the psychoanalytic unconscious, but it seems fair to say that some of what they say about *bhavaṅga* tends in that direction, and certainly it is the case that these writers have not made clear how they arrive at some of their conclusions on the basis of what is actually said in the texts. In such circumstances a careful consideration of the way in which *bhavaṅga* is presented in the ancient sources seems appropriate. My basic sources for this exposition of the nature of *bhavaṅga* are the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa, the *Atthasālinī* (Buddhaghosa's commentary to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*), Buddhadatta's *Abhidhammāvatāra* and Anuruddha's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.[6]

In the first place, I shall point out in this paper that the tendency to view *bhavaṅga* as a mental blank simply does not reflect what is said in the texts. If *bha-*

vaṅga is "unconsciousness", then it certainly is not unconsciousness in the sense of a mental blank. In fact *bhavaṅga* is understood in the texts as in most respects sharing the same properties as other types of consciousness (*citta*); *bhavaṅga* is not something different from consciousness, rather it is consciousness operating in a particular mode (*ākāra*) or consciousness performing a particular function (*kicca*).[7] Secondly, while I do not wish to get involved here in detailed discussions of the extent to which the Theravāda notion of *bhavaṅga* does or does not correspond to a psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious, I do wish to argue that *bhavaṅga* is clearly understood in the ancient literature as a mental province that defines the essential character and capabilities of a given being, and that this mental province is seen as exerting some kind of influence on conscious mental states.

Bhavaṅga and consciousness

As defined in the Abhidhamma, then, *bhavaṅga* is truly a kind or mode or function of "consciousness" (*citta*), it is most definitely not "unconscious" (*acittaka*).[8] The Theravādin Abhidhamma treats *citta* as one of the four *paramattha-dhammas* along with *cetasika, rūpa* and *nibbāna*. As is well known, the Abhidhamma works with what is essentially an intensional model of consciousness: to be conscious is to be conscious of some particular object. Thus the *Atthasālinī* defines *citta*'s particular characteristic as a *dhamma* as that which "thinks of an object".[9] So *bhavaṅga*, like all *citta*, is conscious of something.[10] (Our lack of awareness of *bhavaṅga* should be explained not by reference to *bhavaṅga*'s being unconscious, but by reference to our not clearly remembering what we were conscious of in *bhavaṅga*.) I shall return to the question of the object of *bhavaṅga* below, but, in general, objects of the mind may be of four kinds: a physical object (i.e., a past, present or future sight, sound, smell, taste or bodily sensation), a mental object (i.e., a past, present or future complex of *citta* and *cetasika*), a concept (*paññatti*), and the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata-dhātu, nibbāna*);[11] the object of *bhavaṅga* may be any of the first three kinds but is in effect always a past object, except in the case of *paññatti*, which is "not to be classified" (*na-vattabba*) as either past, present or future.[12] According to Theravāda Abhidhamma *citta* cannot arise as a *dhamma* in isolation from other *dhammas*; it always occurs associated (*sampayutta*) with other mental *dhammas* or *cetasikas*. The minimum number of associated *cetasikas* is seven according to the post-canonical Abhidhamma;[13] the maximum is thirty-six.[14] In general, the eighteen kinds of mind without motivations (*ahetuka*) which perform the more or less mechanical part of the consciousness process are simpler in nature with fewer *cetasikas* than the kinds of mind that have motivations (*sahetuka*). I shall return to the question of the nature of the specific types of mind that can perform the function of *bhavaṅga* below; suffice it to note here that they have ten, or between thirty and thirty-four *cetasikas*; from this perspective *bhavaṅga* is as rich and complex a form of consciousness as any other type of consciousness.

Consciousness is said to be in its *bhavaṅga* mode whenever no active consciousness process is occurring; in other words, *bhavaṅga* is the passive, inactive state of the mind—the mind when resting in itself. Ordinary waking consciousness is to be understood as the mind continually and very rapidly emerging from and lapsing back into *bhavaṅga* in response to various sense stimuli coming in through the five sense-doors and giving rise to sense-door consciousness processes; these will be interspersed with mind-door processes of various sorts. In contrast, the dream state is understood as essentially confined to mind-door processes occurring in what the texts, following the *Milindapañha*, call "monkey sleep" (*kapi-niddā, kapi-middha, makkaṭa-niddā*).[15] In deep sleep, the mind rests in inactivity and does not emerge from *bhavaṅga*.[16]

This basic switching between a passive and active state of mind is understood to apply not only to the consciousness of human beings but to that of all beings in the thirty-one realms of existence, from beings suffering in *niraya* to the *brahmās* in the pure abodes and formless realms; the only exception is the case of "unconscious beings" (*asañña-satta*), who remain without any consciousness (*acittaka*) for 500 *mahākappas*.[17] In other words, to have a mind, to be conscious, is to switch between these two modes of mind. In technical terms, this switching between the passive and active modes of consciousness corresponds to a switching between states of mind that are the results (*vipāka*) of previous *kamma* (that is, previous active states of consciousness) and the states of consciousness that are actively wholesome (*kusala*) and unwholesome (*akusala*) and constitute *kamma* on the mental level, motivating acts of speech and body, and which are thus themselves productive of results.

If *bhavaṅga* is essentially consciousness in its passive mode, then what exactly is the nature of this passive, resultant kind of mind? The tendency for some modern commentators to assume that *bhavaṅga* is a sort of mental blank is surprising in certain respects, since the texts in fact give a considerable amount of information on the question, but it probably follows from a failure to take into account the Abhidhamma schema as a whole. I have already indicated some ways in which *bhavaṅga* is as sophisticated and complex a kind of consciousness as any other, and at this point it is worth filling in some further details.

The developed Abhidhamma system gives eighty-nine (or 121) basic classes of consciousness.[18] These classes of consciousness themselves are divided up in the texts according to various schemes of classification, the most fundamental of which reveals a fourfold hierarchy of consciousness. At the bottom end of the scale, there are the fifty-four classes of consciousness that pertain to the sphere of the five senses (*kāmāvacara*); this broad category of consciousness is characteristic of the normal state of mind of not only human beings, but also animals, hungry ghosts, hell beings, *asuras*, and *devas*. Next come the fifteen classes of consciousness pertaining to the sphere of form (*rūpāvacara*), followed by the twelve classes of consciousness of the formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*); both these categories characterise the normal state of mind of various types of divine being designated *brahmās*, and also the state of mind of other beings when

attaining the *jhānas* and formless attainments respectively. Finally, there are the eight kinds of world-transcending (*lokuttara*) consciousness; these types of consciousness have *nibbāna* as their object, and are experienced only at the time of attaining one of the eight paths and fruits of stream-attainment (*sotāpatti*), once-return (*sakadāgāmitā*), non-return (*anāgāmitā*), and *arahant*-ship.

Various other schemes of classification operate within these four broad categories. Thus, certain of the eighty-nine *cittas* are wholesome, certain unwholesome, certain resultant, certain *kiriya*;[19] certain of them are with motivations (*sahetuka*), certain without motivations (*ahetuka*).[20] Not all of these latter categories are relevant in each of the former four broad categories. In terms of our earlier discussion, *kusala/akusala* comprises the thirty-three *cittas* of the eighty-nine that function as the active *kamma* of the mind.[21] The category of resultant or *vipāka* comprises the thirty-six kinds of mind that are the passive results in various ways of the previous thirty-three. Since *bhavaṅga* is an example of mind that is *vipāka*, it is worth looking a little more closely at these varieties of mind. Of the thirty-six *vipākas*, twenty three belong to the *kāmāvacara*, five to the *rūpāvacara*, four to the *arūpāvacara*, and four to the *lokuttara*. *Vipākas* may be the results of either previous *kusala* or previous *akusala* states of mind; of the thirty-six, seven are the results of unwholesome states of mind, the remaining twenty-nine are the results of wholesome states of mind.

Beings experience the results of wholesome and unwholesome states of mind in a variety of ways. Leaving aside the perhaps rather exceptional circumstances of the experience of the transcendent *vipākas*, resultant *citta* is taken as most commonly experienced, at least consciously, in the process of sensory perception.[22] The bare experience of all pleasant and unpleasant sensory stimuli through the five senses is regarded as the result of previous wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* respectively. This accounts for ten of the thirty-six *vipākas*.[23] In the wake of this experience, in order to respond actively with wholesome or unwholesome *kamma* at the stage known as "impulsion" (*javana*), the mind must pass first of all through the stages of "receiving" (*sampaṭi-cchana*), "investigating" (*santīraṇa*) and "determining" (*votthapana*); the first two of these three stages are also understood to be the province of five specific types of *vipāka* consciousness.[24] At the conclusion of such a sense-door process and also at the conclusion of a *kāmāvacara* mind-door process, the mind, having reached the end of the active *javana* stage, may pass on to a stage of the consciousness process known as *tad-ārammaṇa* or "taking the same object". At this stage one of the eight *mahāvipāka-cittas* (the eight *kāmāvacara vipākas* with motivations) holds on to the object of the consciousness process for one or two moments. This brings us directly to the notion of *bhavaṅga*, for *tad-ārammaṇa* is understood as something of a transitional stage between the truly active mode of mind and its resting in inactivity.[25] Thus, at the conclusion of a consciousness process, the mind, no longer in its active mode, nevertheless momentarily holds on to the object it has just savoured, before finally letting go of that object and lapsing back into the inactive state whence it had previously emerged.

Of the total of eighty-nine classes of consciousness, nineteen among the thirty-six *vipākas* are said to be able to perform the function of *bhavaṅga*: unwholesome resultant investigating consciousness, wholesome resultant investigating consciousness, the eight sense-sphere resultants with motivations, the five form-sphere resultants and the four formless-sphere resultants.[26] Thus *bhavaṅga* consciousness is not just of one single type; the range of *citta* that can perform this function is considerable. Since the kind of *citta* that can perform the function of *bhavaṅga* is exclusively resultant, it is a being's previous wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* that will determine precisely which of the nineteen possible classes will perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for that being.[27] Thus, at the risk of spelling out the obvious, unwholesome resultant investigating consciousness (*akusala-vipāka-upekkhāsahagata-santīraṇa-citta*) is considered to result from the twelve varieties of actively unwholesome *citta* motivated by delusion and greed, delusion and hate, or merely delusion. A being who experiences this as his or her *bhavaṅga* must be one of four kinds: a hell being, an animal, a hungry ghost, or an *asura*. Wholesome resultant investigating consciousness, on the other hand, is the result of actively wholesome consciousness of the sense-sphere, but wholesome consciousness that is somehow compromised—it is not *that* wholesome. In other words, it appears to be regarded as the result of rather weak varieties of the four classes of wholesome sense-sphere consciousness that are not associated with knowledge (*ñāṇa-vippayutta*) and thus have only two of the three wholesome motivations: non-attachment (*alobha*) and friendliness (*adosa*). This kind of *citta* is said to function as *bhavaṅga* for human beings born with some serious disability.[28] The eight wholesome sense-sphere resultants with motivations are the results of stronger wholesome *cittas* which they exactly mirror, being either with just two motivations or with all three motivations. These are the *bhavaṅga* for normal human beings and also for the various classes of sense-sphere *devas*. The five form-sphere and four formless-sphere resultant *cittas* again exactly mirror their actively wholesome counterparts and perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for the different kinds of *brahmā*.

What follows from this is that it is the nature of *bhavaṅga* that defines in general what kind of being one is—it gives one's general place in the overall scheme of things. However, as the implications of this understanding are drawn out, I think it becomes clear that we need to go further than this: *bhavaṅga* does not simply define *what* one is, it defines precisely *who* one is

The kind of *bhavaṅga* within a general class of beings is also variable, and this relates to the kind of experiences that a being may experience during his or her lifetime. The general principle of this way of thinking is established by the fact that beings in any of the four descents—beings with a *bhavaṅga* that is unwholesome resultant *citta* without motivations—are said to be intrinsically unable to generate, however hard they try, the five kinds of form-sphere *jhāna* consciousness, the four formless-sphere consciousness and the eight varieties of transcendent consciousness—all these kinds of *citta* are quite simply beyond their capabilities.[29]

But let us consider this further with regard to human beings. Human beings can be born with three basic classes of *bhavaṅga*: (i) the wholesome resultant *citta* without motivations; (ii) the four kinds of two-motivationed wholesome resultant *citta*; (iii) the four kinds of three-motivationed wholesome resultant *citta*. The texts further refine this by splitting the second category to give four classes of *bhavaṅga* for human beings: two-motivationed wholesome resultant *citta* may be either the result of two-motivationed wholesome *citta* alone, or it may be the result of two-motivationed wholesome *citta* and weak three-motivationed wholesome *citta*; three motivationed resultant *citta* is exclusively the result of three-motivationed wholesome *citta*. However, even among human beings, it is only those with a three-motivationed *bhavaṅga*—a *bhavaṅga* that includes the motivation of wisdom (*amoha*)—that can generate *jhāna* consciousness and the other attainments.[30]

Bhavaṅga and the process of death and rebirth

Having discussed the nature of the kinds of *citta* that can function as *bhavaṅga* for different kinds of beings, it is necessary at this point to look more closely at the process by which a being's *bhavaṅga* is established. A being's *bhavaṅga* is of the same type throughout his or her life—this is, of course, just another way of saying that it is the *bhavaṅga* that defines the kind of being.[31] It follows that the only time the nature of a being's *bhavaṅga* can change is during the process of death and rebirth. So how does it come about that a being's *bhavaṅga* is of such and such a kind and not another?

Essentially the nature of *bhavaṅga* for a given lifetime is determined by the last full consciousness process of the immediately preceding life. This last process is in turn strongly influenced and directly conditioned by—though it is, of course, not its *result* in the technical sense of *vipāka*—the *kamma* performed by the being during his or her life.[32] Relevant here is a fourfold classification of *kamma* according to what will take precedence in ripening and bearing fruit. The four varieties are "weighty" (*garuka*), "proximate" (*āsanna*), "habitual" (*bahula*, *āciṇṇa*), "performed" (*kaṭattā*).[33] This list is explicitly understood as primarily relevant to the time of death. In other words, it is intended to answer the question: at the time of death, which of the many *kammas* a being has performed during his or her lifetime is going to bear fruit and condition rebirth?[34] The answer is that if any "weighty" *kammas* have been performed then these must inevitably come before the mind in some way and overshadow the last consciousness process of a being's life. But if there are no weighty *kammas* then, at least according to the traditions followed by the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, some significant act recalled or done at the time of death will condition the rebirth.[35] In the absence of this, that which has been done repeatedly and habitually will play the key role. Failing that, any repeated act can take centre-stage at the time of death.

The mechanics of the final consciousness process are discussed in some detail

in both the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Sammohavinodanī*, and are summarised in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.[36] The account of any consciousness processes begins with *bhavaṅga*. From *bhavaṅga* the mind adverts in order to take up some different object. If the object is a present sense object, in normal circumstances, the mind adverts to the appropriate sense door by means of the *kiriya* mind element (*mano-dhātu*); if the object is a past (or future) sense-object, *citta* or *cetasika*, or a concept (*paññatti*), the mind adverts to the mind door by the *kiriya* mind consciousness element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). The object of the death consciousness process may be either a sense-object (past or present), or *citta* and *cetasika* (past), or a concept; the process may thus occur either at one of the sense-doors or at the mind-door. Having reached the stage of *javana*, either by way of one of the sense-doors or just the mind-door, five moments of *javana* will occur, followed in certain circumstances by two moments of *tad-ārammaṇa*. Immediately after this is the last consciousness moment of the lifetime in question; this is a final moment of the old *bhavaṅga*, and it receives the technical name of "falling away" or "death consciousness" (*cuti-citta*). It is important to note that this final moment of *bhavaṅga* takes as its object precisely the same object it has always taken throughout life. However, the last *bhavaṅga* of one life is immediately followed by the first *bhavaṅga* of the next life; this first moment of *bhavaṅga* is called "relinking" or "rebirth consciousness" (*paṭi-sandhi-citta*) and, being directly conditioned by the last *javana* consciousnesses of the previous life, it takes as its object the very same object as those—that is, an object that is different from the object of the old *bhavaṅga*. Thus the new *bhavaṅga* is a *vipāka* corresponding in nature and kind to the last active consciousnesses of the previous life, with which it shares the same object. The *paṭi-sandhi* is followed by further occurrences of the new *bhavaṅga* until some consciousness process eventually takes place.

It is worth considering the nature of the object of the death consciousness process further in order to try to form a clearer picture of just what is understood to be going on. The object of the death process receives one of three technical names: *kamma*, sign of *kamma* (*kamma-nimitta*), sign of destiny (*gatinimitta*).[37] In terms of the earlier classification, *kamma* is past *citta* and *cetasika* cognised at the mind-door;[38] what is being said is that at the time of death a being may directly remember a past action, making the actual mental volition of that past action the object of the mind. What seems to be envisaged, though the texts do not quite spell this out, is that this memory prompts a kind of reliving of the original *kamma*: one experiences again a wholesome or unwholesome state of mind similar to the state of mind experienced at the time of performing the remembered action. This reliving of the experience is what directly conditions the rebirth consciousness and the subsequent *bhavaṅga*. A *kamma-nimitta* is a sense-object (either past or present) or a concept. Again what is envisaged is that at the time of death some past sense-object associated with a particular past action comes before the mind (i.e., is remembered) and once more prompts a kind of reliving of the experience. By way of example, the *Vibhaṅga* comment-

ary tells the story of someone who had a *cetiya* built which then appeared to him as he lay on his death bed. Cases where a present sense-object prompts a new action at the actual time of death seem also to be classified as *kamma-nimitta*. For example, the last consciousness process of a given life may involve experiencing a sense-object that prompts greed *citta* at the stage of *javana*, or the dying person's relatives may present him with flowers or incense that are to be offered on his behalf, and thus provide the occasion for a wholesome *javana*, or the dying person may hear the Dhamma being chanted.[39] The conceptual objects of the *jhānas* and formless attainments are also to be classified as *kamma-nimitta* in the context of the dying process. Thus, for a being about to be reborn as a *brahmā* in one of the realms of the *rūpa-dhātu*, the object of previous meditation attainments comes before him and effectively he attains *jhāna* just before he dies. A *gati-nimitta* is a present sense-object but perceived at the mind door.[40] This kind of object is restricted to cases of beings taking rebirth in one of the unpleasant or pleasant realms of the *kāma-dhātu*. In such cases a being may see where he or she is about to go; this kind of object is not regarded as some conceptual symbol of one's destiny but is classified as a present sense-object perceived at the mind-door, in other words, it is truly an actual vision of the place one is headed for. Again what seems to be envisaged is that this vision is an occasion for and object of a wholesome or unwholesome consciousness process as appropriate.

Stripped of its technicalities, what this Abhidhamma account of what happens in the mind at the time of dying seems to be saying is this: the last consciousness process of a given life operates in principle as a kind of summing up of that life; whatever has been most significant in that life will tend to come before the mind. Moreover, what comes before the mind at this point is what will play the principal role in determining the nature of the subsequent rebirth. This is not an altogether surprising way for Buddhist texts to be viewing the matter. What is interesting, however, is that it makes clear a number of things about the basic understanding of the role and nature of *bhavaṅga* in Theravāda Buddhist psychology—things that seem to me to be incompatible with the view of *bhavaṅga* offered by Steven Collins. A *bhavaṅga* consciousness is directly conditioned by the last active consciousness moments of the immediately preceding life; those last active moments are a kind of summing up of the life in question. So a being's *bhavaṅga* itself represents a kind of summing up of what he or she did in his or her previous life; in crude terms, it represents a kind of balance sheet carried over from the previous life detailing how one did.

Bhavaṅga, dhammas and classification

Having considered how *bhavaṅga* is understood as a kind of resultant consciousness that establishes the general nature of a being, I now want to show that it is essentially *bhavaṅga* that also defines a being as a particular individual. That this is so follows, I suggest, from the way in which the Abhidhamma

classifies *citta*, and the status of these classifications. We have seen how various of the standard eighty-nine classes of *citta* given in the developed Abhidhamma may perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for different classes of being. The important thing to register fully here is that we are dealing with *classes* of consciousness. What I want to suggest here is that the texts intend one to understand that any particular instance or occurrence of *citta* is in fact unique, but will inevitably fall into one of the eighty-nine classes. That this is so may not be exactly explicit in the texts but it surely must follow from the way in which the Abhidhamma describes and uses the various schemes of classification. This is an exceedingly important point that goes to the very heart of the question of what a *dhamma* is, but which is nevertheless not always fully appreciated in contemporary scholarly discussion:

> "[T]he 75 dharmas are meant to provide an exhaustive taxonomy, a classification of all possible types of existent. For example, there is a dharma called 'ignorance' (*avidyā*). There is not just one uniquely individuated momentary occurrence of ignorance. Instead, the dharma 'ignorance' refers to a theoretically infinite set of momentary events, all sharing the same uniquely individuating characteristic and all sharing the same kind of inherent existence. Dharmas are therefore uniquely individuated, marked off from all other possible events, not in the sense that there can be no other momentary event sharing the individuating characteristic of a given momentary event, but rather in the sense that each and every momentary event within a particular set of such events is marked off from each and every momentary event within every other possible set. And there are (according to the Vaibhāṣikas; other schools differ) only 75 such sets, each containing a theoretically infinite number of members. Finally, the conclusion follows that *every member of a given set must be phenomenologically indistinguishable from every other member since all share the same essential existence and the same individuating characteristic. They can be distinguished one from another only in terms of their spatio-temporal locations.*"[41]

What is at issue here is Griffiths' final conclusion. Whether or not Griffiths thinks that this should apply to Buddhist accounts of the nature of a *dharma*, whatever the school, is not entirely clear, but his reference to other schools giving different lists suggests that he does. There are no doubt important differences between the Vaibhāṣika and Theravādin conceptions of the nature of a *dharma/dhamma*. However, while I cannot argue the case fully here, it seems to me that the same considerations that show that Griffiths' conclusion does not work for the Theravādin conception of a *dhamma* should also apply in the case of the Vaibhāṣika conception.

What is quite explicit in Theravādin discussions of *dhammas* is that they did not regard every instance of a particular *dhamma* as phenomenologically indis-

tinguishable from every other instance. Thus according to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the *dhamma* of "one-pointedness of mind" (*cittass' ekaggatā*) occurs in a number of different classes of consciousness, but it is not always appropriate to term this *dhamma* "faculty of concentration" (*samādhindriya*); the reason for this is that sometimes the *dhamma* is too weak to warrant the name.[42] Again, if we compare the first class of wholesome sense-sphere *citta* with the first class of wholesome form-sphere *citta*—the kind of *citta* that constitutes the attainment of the first *jhāna*—we find that in terms of which *dhammas* are present and contributing to the two classes of consciousness, there is absolutely no difference between the two; thus, if Griffiths were right there would be no grounds for making what is a basic distinction between sense-sphere consciousness and formsphere consciousness. The distinction must be made on the grounds of some sort of difference in the quality and/or intensity of the various *dhammas* present. In fact, Buddhadatta tells us that *cetasikas* associated with sense-sphere consciousness themselves belong to the sense-sphere, while *cetasikas* that are associated with form-sphere consciousness themselves belong to the form-sphere.[43] In the *Visuddhimagga* Buddhaghosa makes the following comment with regard to the *dhamma* of "recognition" (*saññā*):

> "Although it is single from the point of view of its own nature by reason of its characteristic of recognising, it is threefold by way of class: wholesome, unwholesome and indeterminate. Therein that associated with wholesome consciousness is wholesome, that associated with unwholesome consciousness is unwholesome, and that associated with indeterminate consciousness is indeterminate. Indeed, there is no consciousness disassociated from recognition, therefore the division of recognition is the same as that of consciousness."[44]

In other words, *saññā* associated with unwholesome consciousness is one thing and that associated with wholesome consciousness quite another; indeed, *saññā* associated with one class of the eighty-nine classes of consciousness is one thing, that associated with a different class is another.

What is clear then is that a given instance of any one kind of *dhamma* is certainly not to be considered as phenomenologically indistinguishable from any other instance. Rather the quality and intensity of what is essentially (i.e., from the point of view of its own nature or *sabhāva*) the same *dhamma* can vary considerably—possibly even infinitely if we take into account very subtle variations.[45] In other words, the finite list of *dhammas*, at least as far as the Theravādin Abhidhamma is concerned, is simply a list of classifications for mental and physical events. Thus to say of something that it is an instance of the *dhamma* of *saññā*, is to say that it is a mental event of the type that falls into the broad class of *saññā*-type events. It is certainly not to say that all events of that class are phenomenologically indistinguishable, for within the class of *saññā*-type events are subdivisions: some instances of *saññā* are *vipāka*, others are not;

furthermore some instances of *vipāka-saññā* are *kāmāvacara*, others may be *rūpāvacara* or *arūpāvacara* or even *lokuttara*; some instances of *kāmāvacara-vipāka-saññā* may be *kusala-vipāka*, other not; and so on. The point is that these various qualities must be understood as in some sense inherent to the very nature of any *actual* instance of a *dhamma*, and they, in addition to spatio-temporal location, distinguish that particular instance from other instances.

The principle I am trying to illustrate is absolutely fundamental to Theravādin Abhidhamma. It is difficult to see just how, without it, it can distinguish the basic eighty-nine classes of consciousness in the way it does, for these distinctions are certainly not all based upon the principle of which *cetasikas* are present and which absent. Again, it is important to grasp that the division into eighty-nine classes of consciousness is by no means final or absolute. The further division of the transcendent classes into forty is common in the texts, giving a total of 121 classes. But it is clear that the texts just regard the division into eighty-nine or 121 as the basic scheme for practical purposes of exposition. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* seems deliberately to introduce more variables to produce ever more complex divisions in order to avoid too fixed a view of things. Thus, Buddhadatta in the *Abhidhammāvatāra*, which follows the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* much more closely than the later introductory manual, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, states that though in brief there are eight kinds of actively wholesome sense-sphere consciousness, if other variables are taken into account there are 17.280 kinds.[46] What are the implications of this for the understanding of the nature of *bhavaṅga* consciousness? If there are 17.280 possible varieties of actively wholesome consciousness, it follows that the corresponding eight classes of resultant consciousnesses might similarly be further subdivided to give 17.280 classes. The kinds of *citta* capable of performing the function of *bhavaṅga* for human beings and the *devas* of the *kāma-dhātu* thus become more variable. What I want to suggest then is that the Abhidhamma texts understand their schemes of classification along the following lines: any given momentary occurrence of consciousness (i.e., assemblage of *citta* and *cetasika*) is understood as falling into one of eighty-nine broad classes as a result of taking into account a number of variables; if further variables are taken into account the number of possible classes increases, and the scheme of classification becomes more complex and sophisticated. Not all the variables involve black and white distinctions, some involve distinctions of degree; if all possible subtle variations were taken into account the possible classes of consciousness would be infinite; in fact any actual occurrence of consciousness consisting of an assemblage of associated *citta* and *cetasika* is unique: although it may be very similar in many respects to some other occurrence, it is not *quite* like any other. What I am claiming is that Abhidhamma systems of classification work in much the same way as other systems of classification. Modern biology classifies life by way of phylum, class, genus, species, and so on without any suggestion that any given instance of a species will, apart from spatio-temporal location, be indistinguishable from other instances of the same species. My conclusion then is that the Abhidhamma

intends us to understand that the *bhavaṅga* consciousness for any given being is unique to that individual: it is the specific result of a unique complex of conditions that can never be exactly replicated. However, the principle that each actually occurring consciousness is to be regarded as unique does not fully apply in the case of *bhavaṅga*, since, for a given being, *bhavaṅga* is something of a constant throughout a being's life; it constantly reproduces itself. Thus I think that in the case of the *bhavaṅga*, the momentary occurrences for a given individual being are intended to be understood as phenomenologically indistinguishable: i.e., the *bhavaṅga* a being experienced at the time of rebirth is phenomenologically indistinguishable from the one he or she will experience at the time of death.

Bhavaṅga, behaviour and the ālaya-vijñāna

We have found that *bhavaṅga* is regarded in the texts as most immediately the result of the last active consciousnesses of the previous life, and that these consciousnesses are in turn seen as a kind of summing up of the life in question; *bhavaṅga-citta* is then itself the most significant aspect of that previous life encapsulated in a single consciousness. Appropriate to this view of the matter, Buddhaghosa discusses the workings of *bhavaṅga* in the process of death and rebirth in the context of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) in order to illustrate how the *saṅkhāras* (conditioned by ignorance) of one life give rise to the third link in the chain, namely *viññāṇa*, understood as the first moment of consciousness in the next life.[47] So *bhavaṅga* is the basic mentality a being carries over from a previous life. Moreover, *bhavaṅga* is a complex *citta* with one specific object, and which constantly recurs throughout a being's life.

The fact that the Abhidhamma uses the notion of *bhavaṅga* to define both the nature of a given being and also what constitutes a lifetime as that being suggests that *bhavaṅga* is being used to explain not merely the *logic* of continuity but also why a particular being continues to be that particular being throughout his or her life, rather than becoming some other being—to become another being is to change one's *bhavaṅga*. Thus, why I do not suddenly start behaving like an animal is because I have what is essentially a human *bhavaṅga*. In other words, the notion of *bhavaṅga* is, in part at least, intended to provide some account of why I am me and why I continue to behave like me; it is surely intended to give some theoretical basis for observed consistency in behaviour patterns, character traits and the habitual mental states of a given individual.

The Theravādin Abhidhamma system is in certain respects rather skeletal: we are given bare bones which are not entirely fleshed out. The logic of certain details of the system is not always immediately apparent, but the obvious care and ingeniuity that has gone into its working out should make us wary of attributing the quirks to muddled thinking. One of the questions that needs to be asked about *bhavaṅga* is why it is said to occur *between* every consciousness process. Why *bhavaṅga* is said to occur in deep dreamless sleep is obvious:

without it there would be a hole. But it is not obvious that there is a hole in ordinary waking experience that needs filling with *bhavaṅga*. Why not simply run the consciousness processes together? Why say that between every consciousness process one returns to this quite specific state of mind? It does not seem possible to answer this question exactly, but reflecting on it in the light of what I have argued above about *bhavaṅga* makes it clearer what the texts are claiming: that in between every active consciousness process one, as it were, returns momentarily to the basic state of mind that defines who one is, before emerging from that state into active consciousness once more. Thus, according to the principles of the twenty-four conditions (*paccaya*) as elaborated in the *Paṭṭhāna*, the *bhavaṅga* state of mind must be understood as conditioning in various ways a being's every response to the world around him or her. Although passive in so far as it is a *vipāka*, the *bhavaṅga* mind, like all *dhammas* and assemblages of *dhammas*, will inevitably condition other *dhammas* and assemblages of *dhammas* by way of certain of the twenty-four conditional relations. There is a sense then in which the *bhavaṅga* can be seen as a deeper level of the mind that acts on our conscious mind. Ordinary waking experience is thus presented in the Abhidhamma as a kind of dialogue between one's essential nature (*bhavaṅga*) and various external stimuli. However, even reference to the intricacies of the *Paṭṭhāna* is unlikely to answer all our questions.

While it is clear that *bhavaṅga-citta* is understood as the mechanism that carries certain mental effects from one life to the next, it does not seem possible on the basis of what is said explicitly in the texts to justify the claim that *bhavaṅga* carries with it *all* character traits, memories, habitual tendencies, etc. If we take the case of a human being taking rebirth by means of one of the four sense-sphere *vipāka-cittas* that have all three wholesome motivations, this is to be understood as a rebirth that is essentially the result of wholesome *kamma*. However, such a human being will not only have the capacity to perform wholesome *kamma*. That is to say, according to the principles of Buddhist thought as usually understood, such a being will also have brought with him from previous lives certain unwholesome latent tendencies (*anusaya*), certain as yet uneradicated defilements. But the *bhavaṅga-citta* in question is wholesome resultant. In what sense can we talk about unwholesome tendencies being carried over from one life to the next by a wholesome resultant kind of consciousness? This brings one up against one of the basic problems of Buddhist thought. If consciousness is understood to consist of a temporal series of consciousness moments each having an individual object, then when an ordinary being (*puthujjana*) is experiencing wholesome consciousness, what at that moment distinguishes him or her from an *arahant*? In other words, in what sense do the unwholesome tendencies and defilements still exist for that being? The answer is, of course, in the sense that they *might* arise at any moment. That is to say, they exist potentially. But where—or perhaps how—do they exist potentially? This is clearly a problem that historically Buddhist thought was well aware of. The Sarvāstivādin account of *dharmas* existing in the past, present and future, the Sautrāntika theory of

bīja, and the Yogācārin "store consciousness" (*ālaya-vijñāna*) all address this question in one way or another. The problem was how to answer the question whilst at the same time preserving perhaps the most fundamental principle of Buddhist thought: the middle way between annihilationism and eternalism.

Curiously, the Theravādin Abhidhamma seems not to articulate an explicit answer to the question, yet it is surely inconceivable that those who thought out the traditions of Abhidhamma handed down to us by Buddhaghosa, Buddhadatta and Dhammapāla had not thought of the problem. What would those ancient *ābhidhammikas* have said? Is the answer to the problem deliberately left vague so as to avoid getting entangled in annihilationism and eternalism? The notion of *bhavaṅga* as explicitly expounded in the Theravādin Abhidhamma seems certainly intended to provide some account of psychological continuity. It is clearly getting close to being something that might be used to give some explanation of how latent tendencies are carried over from one life to the next and where they subsist when inactive. To understand *bhavaṅga* in such terms is not necessarily to assimilate it to the twentieth century notion of the unconscious. It is, however, to attribute to it some of the functions of the Yogācārin *ālaya-vijñāna*. Indeed, Louis de La Vallée Poussin some sixty years ago and E.R. Sarathchandra some thirty years ago suggested that the notion of *bhavaṅga* bears certain similarities to the *ālaya-vijñāna*,[48] and it is this, as much as the modern idea of the unconscious, that has probably influenced contemporary Theravādin writers in their expositions of *bhavaṅga*. While assimilating *bhavaṅga* to the *ālaya-vijñāna* may be problematic, it is not entirely unreasonable to suggest that both conceptions ultimately derive from a common source or at least a common way of thinking about the problem of psychological continuity in Buddhist thought. As Lance Cousins and Lambert Schmithausen have pointed out, Vasubandhu cites the notion of the *bhavāṅga-vijñāna* of the Sinhalese school (Tāmraparṇīya-nikāya) as a forerunner of the *ālaya-vijñāna*.[49] A full comparative study of *bhavaṅga* and the *ālaya-vijñāna* is beyond the scope of the present paper, but it is worth trying to take the remarks of Sarathchandra and others just a little further by briefly highlighting three significant points of contact between the two notions.[50] For the first two points, I take as a representative source Hsüan-tsang's *Ch'eng weishih lun* (*Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi*).

Like *bhavaṅga*, the *ālaya-viñāna* is understood as essentially the result of previous actions which give rise to a particular kind of rebirth; in other words, it is the nature of the *ālaya-vjñāna* which determines what kind of experiences a being is destined to have.[51] Again like *bhavaṅga*, the *ālaya-vijñāna* is said to be the mode of consciousness at the time of death and rebirth; furthermore, Hsūantsang likens consciousness at these times to consciousness in deep dreamless sleep.[52] Finally, we have the association of both *bhavaṅga* and the *ālaya-vijñāna* with the notion of the "originally pure mind".

This notion, while not apparently developed to any great extent in early Buddhist texts, nevertheless appears to have been widespread. The classic source for the idea within the Pāli tradition is a passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

> "Radiant is the mind, *bhikkhus*, but sometimes it is defiled by defilements that come from without. The ordinary man without understanding does not know it as it truly is. And so I declare that the ordinary man without understanding has not cultivated the mind. Radiant is the mind, *bhikkhus*, and sometimes it is completely freed from defilements that come from without. The noble disciple with understanding knows it as it truly is. And so I declare that the noble disciple with understanding has cultivated the mind."[53]

An equivalent passage referring to this "radiant mind" (*prabhāsvara-citta*) appears to have been well known and of some significance to a number of the ancient schools.[54] Certain later Mahāyāna traditions identify the originally pure mind of such passages with the *tathāgatagarbha*. Thus, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* describes the *tathāgatagarbha* as amongst other things "naturally radiant, pure, originally pure" (*prakṛti-prabhāsvara-viśuddhādi-viśuddha*).[55] More significantly for our present concerns, the Sūtra goes on to identify the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālaya-vijñāna* and vice versa (*tathāgatagarbha-śabda-saṃśabditam ālayavijñānam, ālayavijñāna-saṃśabditas tathāgatagarbhaḥ*).[56] Of some relevance here too are Yogācārin traditions concerning the relationship of the *ālaya-vijñāna* to the so called ninth or stainless consciousness (*amala-vijñāna*). In general, according to the Yogācārin view of things, the *ālaya-vijñāna* effectively ceases at the moment of enlightenment; what remains is the stainless consciousness—consciousness from which all defilements and stains have gone. In short, the stainless consciousness is the consciousness of a Buddha. Its precise relationship to the *ālaya-vijñāna* seems to have been something of a moot point among Yogācārin thinkers, some preferring to regard it as in essence something different from the *ālaya-vijñāna*, while other viewed it as in essence not different from the *ālaya-vijñāna*, but rather the *ālaya-vijñāna* freed from all stains—in other words, the *amala-vijñāna* should be regarded as the *ālaya-vijñāna* of Buddhas.[57]

In the light of all this, the fact that the Theravādin commentarial tradition unequivocally states that the radiant mind of the *Aṅguttara* passage is *bhavaṅgacitta* is surely of some significance, and adds weight to the suggestion that the notions of *bhavaṅga-citta* and *ālaya-vijñāna* have some sort of common ancestry within the history of Buddhist thought.[58] The *Manorathapūraṇī* explanation of how *bhavaṅga* comes to be termed defiled is worth quoting in full since to my knowledge it has hitherto received no scholarly comment:

> "*Defiled*: It [i.e., *bhavaṅga-citta*] is called defiled is what is said. How come? It is like the way in which parents, teachers or preceptors who are virtuous and of good conduct get the blame and a bad name on account of their unvirtuous, ill-behaved and unaccomplished sons, pupils or colleagues when they do not reprimand, train, advise or instruct them. This is to be understood by way of the following equival-

> ents: *bhavaṅga* consciousness should be seen like the virtuous parents, teachers and preceptors; their getting a bad name on account of their sons and so on is like the originally pure *bhavaṅga* consciousness's being called defiled because of defilements which come at the moment of impulsion on account of consciousnesses that are accompanied by greed and so on, and whose nature is attachment, aversion and delusion."[59]

Here the commentary maintains that strictly *bhavaṅga* remains undefiled; it is only called "defiled" by virtue of its giving rise in some way to unwholesome consciousness. That *bhavaṅga* is seen as in some sense begetting or producing unwholesome consciousness at the moment of impulsion is in itself instructive and of some relevance to our present concerns. The point is further underlined by the *Atthasālinī* when it comments, with reference to *bhavaṅga*'s being termed "clear" (*paṇḍara*), that "in the same way as a stream that flows from the Ganges is like the Ganges and one that flows from the Godhāvarī is like the Godhāvarī, even unwholesome consciousness is said to be clear because of its flowing from *bhavaṅga*".[60] The images used by the commentators here—active consciousness is like the children or pupils of *bhavaṅga*, or like a stream that flows from *bhavaṅga*—at least suggest that they understood there to be some kind of continuity between *bhavaṅga* and active consciousness, some kind of *influence* exerted by *bhavaṅga* on active consciousness. However, the mechanism of this influence is not spelt out. In fact, the commentarial treatment here seems to raise more questions than it answers. For example, in the case of beings reborn in the "descents" where *bhavaṅga* is always unwholesome resultant, how can it be said to be defiled in name only and not truly defiled? In what sense is it pure, clear or radiant?

While certain questions remain concerning the precise functioning of *bhavaṅga* in the Theravādin Abhidhamma, I hope to have shown in this paper that *bhavaṅga* is most definitely not to be understood merely as a kind of "mental blank" and "logical stop-gap". For any given being *bhavaṅga* consciousness represents a mental province where at least certain characteristics unique to that individual are located (although the spatial metaphor is not the one preferred by the texts). Moreover this mental province exercises a certain determinative power over conscious mental states. While it is perhaps something of a misconceived exercise to speculate on whether this understanding of *bhavaṅga* had a direct and explicit influence on the development of the Yogācārin notion of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, it surely must be the case that these two concepts are to be understood as having a certain affinity and that they belong to the same complex of ideas within the history of Buddhist thought.

Notes

1 See E.R. Sarathchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, Colombo, 1961, 75–96 (this is the fullest account); *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed., G.P. Malalasekera *et al.*, Colombo, 1961–, s.v. *bhavaṅga*; Nyanatiloka Thera, *Buddhist Dictionary*, Colombo, Frewin & Co., 1956, s.v. *bhavaṅga*; V.F. Gunaratna, "Rebirth Explained", *The Wheel*, 167/169, Kandy, 1980; L.S. Cousins, "The Paṭṭhāna and the Development of the Theravādin Abhidhamma", *JPTS*, 10, 1981, 22–46, 22–5; S. Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 238–47 (the fullest account in more recent literature).

2 Nyanatiloka Thera, *op. cit.*, 29. Cf. Gunaratna, *op. cit.*, 23–5; P. De Silva, *Buddhist and Freudian Psychology*, Colombo, Lake House, 1973, 52–3. De Silva does not explicitly equate *bhavaṅga* and the unconscious as implied by Collins, *op. cit.*, 304, n. 22, he merely discusses the term in this connection and in fact acknowledges that the term is problematic since what scholars have said about it seems contradictory and to involve a certain interpretive element.

3 See S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 238–47; P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, La Salle, Open Court Publishing Co., 1986, 38–9; Griffiths, quite mistakenly, even goes so far as to state that "*bhavaṅga* is a type of consciousness that operates with no object" (36).

4 S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 2, 45.

5 S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 243–4: "Certainly, the *bhavaṅga* is a mental but not conscious phenomenon; but in following the sense of the term 'unconscious' further into psychoanalytic theory, the similarity ends. For Freud, the word unconscious was used not only in what he called a 'descriptive' sense, but also in a 'systematic' sense. That is, as he writes, apart from the descriptive sense, in which 'we call a psychical process unconscious whose existence we are obliged to assume—for some such reason as that we infer it from its effects—but of which we know nothing', it is also the case that 'we have come to understand the term "unconscious" in a topographical or systematic sense as well . . . and have used the word more to denote a mental province rather than a quality of what is mental'. Insofar as the Buddhist concept of *bhavaṅga* might be thought of as being part of a *topographical* account of mind, it is so only in relation to a systematic account of perception, and not of motivation. The motivation of action, of course, is the crucial area of psychology for any psychoanalytic theory. While many aspects of the Buddhist attitude to motivation do resemble some Freudian themes, they are nowhere related systematically to *bhavaṅga* in the *Theravāda* tradition before modern times. Accordingly, the modern comparison between *bhavaṅga* and psychoanalytic unconscious must be developed as part of what one might call 'speculative' or 'creative' Buddhist philosophy, rather than by historical scholarship."

6 References to the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* and its commentary are to *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha and Abhidhammattahvibhāvinīṭīkā*, ed. by Hammalawa Saddhātissa, PTS, 1989 and to two translations (which do not include the commentary): S.Z. Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, PTS, 1910; Nārada Mahāthera, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, Kandy, 4th edition, 1980.

7 *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 110; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 13–4; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 114–7; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 159–74.

8 Whether one is, from the physiological point of view, conscious or unconscious in fact turns out to have nothing to do with whether one is in *bhavaṅga* or not; *bhavaṅga-citta* is contrasted with *vīthi-citta* or process-consciousness, and active consciousness processes can occur whether one is conscious or unconscious (as in the case of dreams, see notes 15 and 45 below). Thus *bhavaṅga* is understood to be a *citta* and not *acittaka*; from the Abhidhamma point of view the only times a being is

strictly unconscious (*acittaka*) is in the meditation attainment that leads to rebirth amongst the "unconscious beings" (*asañña-satta*), when reborn as an unconscious being, and during the attainment of cessation (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha* or *nirodhasamāpatti*). The attainment of cessation as being *acittaka* is discussed by Griffiths (*op. cit.*); on the *asañña-sattas* see D, I, 28, Sv 118; DAT, I, 217.

9 *Atthasālinī*, 63: *ārammaṇaṃ cintetī ti cittaṃ*.

10 For a specific reference to *bhavaṅga*'s having an object see *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 114.

11 *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 43–48; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 15–6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 119–22; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 181–94.

12 Strictly during the process of rebirth, it is possible for *bhavaṅga* briefly—for four consciousness moments—to have a present sense-object; see *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 137, 141. The process of death and rebirth is discussed in more detail below.

13 The so called seven universals (*sabba-citta-sādhāraṇa*) (*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 94–5; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 77–9). The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* might be interpreted as in theory allowing a minimum of six since it does not mention *manasikāra* at *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, 87.

14 *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 8–11; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 102–10; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 127–41.

15 See *Milindapañha*, 300; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 406–8.

16 *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 114 states that when no other *citta* arises interrupting its flow, such as when one has fallen into dreamless sleep, and so on, *bhavaṅga* occurs endlessly, like a flowing stream (*asati santāna-vinivattake aññasmiṃ cittuppāde nadīsotaṃ viya supinaṃ apassato niddokkamana-kālādīsu aparimāṇa-saṃkhaṃ pi pavattati yevā ti*).

17 *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 23–4; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 142; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 242–5.

18 See *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 81–110; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 1–15 (*citta-niddesa*); *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 1–5 (*citta-pariccheda*). The schema of eighty-nine classes of *citta* is distilled by the commentarial tradition from the *cittuppādakaṇḍa* of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (9–124), which by exploiting a number of different variables greatly multiplies the number of possible classes.

19 *Kiriya-citta* is a class of consciousness that is neither productive of a result (i.e., it is not actively wholesome or unwholesome) nor is it the result of actively wholesome or unwholesome *citta*: it is neither *kamma* nor *vipāka* (see *Atthasālinī*, 293). For the most part, the term thus defines the consciousness of Buddhas and arahants, and consists of seventeen classes of *citta* that in principle mirror the seventeen classes of actively wholesome *citta* of the sense, form, and formless spheres. However, there are two classes of *kiriya-citta* essential to the processes of thinking and that all beings continually experience in ordinary consciousness: *citta* that adverts to the five sense-doors (*kiriya-mano-dhātu, pañca-dvārāvajjana*) and *citta* that adverts to the mind-door (*kiriya-mano-viññāṇa-dhātu, manodvārāvajjana*).

20 There are in essence six *dhammas* that are regarded as *hetus*: greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), non-attachment (*alobha*), friendliness (*adosa*), and wisdom (*amoha*). These *dhammas* are *hetus* in the sense of being "roots" (*mūla*) (*Atthasālinī*, 46, 154). Of the eighty-nine classes of *citta*, eighteen are said to be without *hetus* (in principle the basic consciousness of the sense door process), the remaining seventy-one all arise with either one, two or three *hetus*. See *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 12–3; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 113–4; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 154–9.

21 Twelve *akusala* and eight *kusala* from the *kāmāvacara*, five and four *kusala* from the *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara* respectively, four from the *lokuttara*.

22 For the consciousness process in the ancient texts, see: *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 110–24, XVII, 120–45, XX, 43–5; *Atthasālinī*, 266–87; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 49–59; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 17–21. The fullest modern accounts are to be found in: Sarathchandra, *op. cit.*; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 25–53 (this is an important account by a Burmese Abhidhamma master which seems in places to be based on continuing Burmese Abhidhamma traditions); Gunaratna, *op. cit.*; Cousins, *op. cit.* For briefer summaries, see: Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, London, 1969, 129–42; W.F. Jayasuriya, *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism*, Kuala Lumpur, Buddhist Missionary Society, 1976, 100–8; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, 186–91.

23 Five varieties each of *akusala-vipāka* and *kusala-vipāka* sense consciousness.

24 Two receiving *cittas* (*akusala-* and *kusala-vipāka*); three investigating *cittas* (*akusala-vipāka* and two *kusala-vipāka*). The function of *votthapana* is performed by the *kiriya mano-viññāṇa-dhātu/mano-dvārāvajjana citta*.

25 *Atthasālinī*, 270–1, discusses how in different circumstances *tad-ārammaṇa* can be termed "root" (*mūla*) *bhavaṅga* and "visiting" (*āgantuka*) *bhavaṅga*.

26 *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 113–4; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 13.

27 The details of what follows are taken primarily from the discussion of the four kinds of *paṭisandhi* and of *kamma* (*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 23–6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 139–49; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 241–55, but reference has also been made to *Atthasālinī*, 267–88 (275), *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 49 (vv. 382–3).

28 *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 134: *tattha akusala-vipākāya ahetuka-manoviññāṇa-dhātuyā apāyesu paṭisandhi hoti. kusala-vipākāya manussa-loke jacc-andha-jāti-badhira-jātiummattaka-jāti-eḷamūganapuṃsakādīnaṃ. aṭṭhahi sahetuka-kāmāvacara-vipākehi kāmāvacara-devesu ceva manussesu ca puññavantānaṃ paṭisandhi hoti. pañcahi rūpāvacara-vipākehi rūpi-brahmaloke. catūhi arūpāvacara-vipākehi arūpa-loke ti yena ca yattha paṭisandhi hoti sā eva tassa anurūpā paṭisandhi nāma*. Also cf. *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 111–3; incidentally, here wholesome resultant investigating *citta* is described as the result of weak two-motivationed wholesome *kamma* (*dubbala-dvihetuka-kusala-vipāka*).

29 *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 21: *duhetukānam ahetukānañ ca panettha kiriyā-javanāni ceva appanā-javanāni ca na labbhanti*.

30 This follows from Buddhadatta's full exposition of which classes of consciousness are experienced by which kinds of being; see *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 38–9 (vv. 215–85).

31 *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 24: "Thus rebirth, *bhavaṅga* and the mind at death in a single birth are just one and have one object." (*paṭisandhi bhavaṅgañ ca tathā cavana-mānasaṃ | ekam eva tath' ev' eka-visayañ c' eka-jātiya*).

32 The relevant conditions would be *nissaya, upanissaya, āsevana*.

33 *Visuddhimagga*, XIX, 14–16; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 117 (v. 1244); *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 24.

34 The key to interpreting the list is the comment made with regard to *kamma* that is *kaṭattā*: in the absence of the other three, it effects rebirth (*Visuddhimagga*, XIX, 15: *tesaṃ abhāve taṃ paṭisandhiṃ ākaḍḍhati*). However, *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, 130–31 gives the fullest comment: "Therein *kamma* may be either unwholesome or wholesome; among weighty and unweighty *kammas*, that which is weighty—on the unwholesome side, *kamma* such as killing one's mother, etc., or on the wholesome side, sublime *kamma* [i.e., the *jhāna*, etc.]—ripens first, like a great flood washing over lesser waters, even if there are proximate *kammas* and the rest. Therefore, it is called weighty. In its absence, among distant and proximate *kammas*, that which is proximate and recalled at the time of death ripens first. There is nothing to say about that which is done close to the time of death. But if this too is absent, among habitual and unhabitual *kammas*, that which is habitual, whether wholesome or unwholesome,

ripens first. But *kamma* because of performance, which is something repeated, effects rebirth in the absence of the previous [three]." (*tattha kusalaṃ vā hotu akusalaṃ vā garukāgarukesu yaṃ garukaṃ akusala-pakkhe mātughātakādi-kammaṃ kusala-pakkhe mahaggata-kammaṃ vā tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati, sati pi āsannādi-kamme parittaṃ udakaṃ ottharitvā gacchanto mahogho viya. tathā hi taṃ garukan ti vuccati. tasmiṃ asati dūrāsannesu yaṃ āsannaṃ maraṇa-kāle anussaritaṃ tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati. āsanna-kāle kate vattabam eva natthi. tasmiṃ asati āciṇṇānāciṇṇesu ca yaṃ āciṇṇaṃ susīlyaṃ vā dussīlyaṃ vā tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati. kaṭattā-kammaṃ pana laddhāsevanaṃ purimānaṃ abhāvena paṭisandhiṃ ākaḍḍhati.*)

35 The *Visuddhimagga* and *Abihidhammāvatāra* give habitual *kamma* precedence over death proximate *kamma; Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, 131 acknowledges the discrepancy but argues that the order preserved in *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, makes better sense: "As when the gate of a cowpen full of cattle is opened, although there are steers and bulls behind, the animal close to the gate of the pen, even if it is a weak old cow, gets out first. Thus, even when there are other strong wholesome and unwholesome *kammas*, because of being close to the time of death, that which is proximate gives its result first and is therefore given here first." (*yathā pana gogaṇa-paripuṇṇassa vajassa dvāre vivaṭe aparabhāge dammagava-balavagavesu santesu pi yo vaja-dvārassa āsanno hoti antamaso dubbalajaragavo pi, so yeva paṭhamataraṃ nikkhamati. evaṃ garukato aññesu kusalākusalesu santesu pi, maraṇa-kālassa āsannattā āsannam eva paṭhamaṃ vipākaṃ deti ti idha taṃ paṭhamaṃ vuttaṃ.*)

36 *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 133–45; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 155–60; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 27–8; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 149–53; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 265–74.

37 *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 155–6.

38 *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 156 defines it more specifically as produced skilful and unskilful volition (*āyuhitā kusalākusala-cetanā*).

39 *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 138, 142; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 158–9. In the context of rebirth in the *kāmadhātu* the *Visuddhimagga* and *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā* appear to take *kamma-nimitta* as solely referring to past sense-objects perceived through the mind-door; a present sense-object perceived through one of the five sense-doors seems to be added as a fourth kind of object in addition to *kamma, kamma-nimitta* and *gati-nimitta*. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 27 (Nārada, *Manual of Abhidhamma*, 268), however, states that a *kamma-nimitta* may be past or present and may be perceived at any of the six doors. This suggests that *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* is taking this fourth kind of object as a kind of *kamma-nimitta*. This also seems to be the position of *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, 147, following Ānanda's *Mūlaṭīkā*.

40 M. Nārada, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 182; *dvāra-vimuttānañ ca pana paṭisandhibhavaṅga-cuti-saṅkhātānaṃ chabbidhaṃ pi yathā-sambhavaṃ yebhuyyena bhavantare cha-dvāra-gahitaṃ paccuppannam atītaṃ paññatti-bhūtaṃ vā kammaṃ kamma-nimittaṃ gati-nimitta-sammataṃ ālambanaṃ hoti.*

41 P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless*, 53–4 (my italics).

42 See *Atthasālinī*, 262–4. There are many examples one could give of this principle: *adosa* is only to be classified as *mettā* in certain types of consciousness; *tatramajjhattatā* is only to be classified as *upekkhā* in certain types of consciousness. Again, the *dhammas* covered by such groupings as the *bojjhaṅgas maggaṅgas*, etc., are only to be designated as such in certain circumstances. The distinction between the otherwise identical lists of the *indriyas* and *balas* is made by reference to their relative strengths or intensity in both the Theravādin and Vaibhāṣika systems. The notion of *adhipati* only makes sense if the strength of *dhammas* can very. See R.M.L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhipakkhiyā Dhammā*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1992, 85–7, 141–5, 156–60, 315–7, 306–7, 338–9.

43 *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 16: *tattha kāmāvacara-citta-sampayuttā kāmā-vacarā. Ibid.*, 22: *rūpāvacara-citta-sampayuttā rūpāvacarā ... eva rūpa-avacara-kusala-cetasikā veditabbā.*

44 *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 130. Buddhaghosa makes the same point with regard to other *dhammas* of the aggregate of *saṅkhāras* at *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 132. Buddhadatta comments that in the context of unwholesome consciousness, *vitakka, viriya*, and *samādhi* are to be distinguished as wrong thought (*micchā-saṅkappa*), wrong effort (*micchā-vāyāma*) and wrong concentration (*micchā-samādhī*) (*Abhidhammattha-vibhāvinīṭīkā*, 24).

45 One of the clearest examples of distinctions being made between different instances of essentially the same *citta* is in the case of dream consciousness. The same wholesome and unwholesome *cittas* occur in dreams as in waking consciousness, but when they occur in dreams, although they still constitute wholesome and unwholesome *kamma*, it is only very feeble *kamma*, thus one does not have to worry about committing *pārājika* offences in one's dreams. See *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 408.

46 *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 4, v. 27: *sattarasa-sahassāni dve satāni asīti ca | kāmāvacara-puññāni bhavantī ti viniddise ||.*

47 *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 133–45.

48 Sarathchandra, *op. cit.*, 88–96; L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi: La siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang*, Paris, 1926, I, 178–9, 196. P. Williams sums up the nature of the *ālaya-vijñāna* as follows: "The substratum consciousness is an ever-changing stream which underlies saṃsāric existence. It is said to be 'perfumed' by phenomenal acts, and the seeds which are the result of this perfuming reach fruition at certain times to manifest as good, bad, or indifferent phenomena. The substratum consciousness, seen as a defiled form of consciousness (or perhaps subconsciousness), is personal in a sense, individual, continually changing and yet serving to give a degree of personal identity and to explain why it is that certain karmic results pertain to this particular individual." (*Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, London, Routledge, 1989, 91).

49 See L. Cousins, *op. cit.*, 22; L. Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*, Tokyo, 1987, I, 7–8. The relevant texts are the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* §35, see E. Lamotte, 'Le traité de l'acte de Vasubandhu', *MCB*, 4, 1936, 250, and the *Pratītyasamutpāda-vyākhyā* (here the notion is ascribed to the Mahīśāsakas—see L. Schmithausen, *op. cit.*, II, 255–6, n. 68). The notion of *bhavāṅga* is not mentioned by Asaṅga in the earlier *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (which makes Schmithausen sceptical about the influence of the notion on the development of the concept of *ālaya-vijñāna*), but is added by the commentator (see É. Lamotte, *La somme du grand véhicule*, Louvain, 1938, II, 28, 8*); the notion is also cited by Hsüan-tsang (see La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, I, 178–9).

50 On the question of whether or not the *ālaya-vijñāna* has objects, see P.J. Griffiths, *op. cit.*, 95–6.

51 L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimāsiddhi*, I, 97–8: "Il est *vipākaphala*, le 'fruit de rétribution' des actes bons ou mauvais qui projettent une existence dans une certaine sphère d'existence, dans une certaine destinée, par une certaine matrice."

52 *op. cit.*: "Le Sūtra dit que, à la conception et à la mort, les êtres ne sont pas sans pensée (*acittaka*) ... La pensée de la conception et de la mort ne peut être que le huitième *vijñāna* ... En ces deux moments, la pensée et le corps sont 'hébétés' comme dans le someil sans rêve (*asvapnikā nidrā*) et dans l'extrême stupeur."

53 Aṅguttara-nikāya, I, 10: *pabhassaraṃ idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ. taṃ assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti. tasmā assutavato putlnijjanassa citta-bhāvanā natthī ti vadāmī ti. pabhassaraṃ idaṃ*

bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttaṃ. taṃ sutavā ariyasāvako yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. tasmā sutavato ariya-sāvakassa citta-bhāvanā atthī ti vadāmī ti.

54 In particular, the Mahāsāṃghika, the Vibhajyavāda and the school of the *Śāriputrābhidharma*; see A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du petit véhicule*, Saigon, 1955, 67–8, 175, 194; É. Lamotte, *L'enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, Louvain, 1962, 52–3.

55 II §28, Nanjio ed., Kyoto, 1923, 77; cf. Lamotte, *L'enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, 54.

56 VI §82, Nanjio, ed., 221–3.

57 P. Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 92–3.

58 *Manorathapūraṇī*, I, 60; cf. *Atthasālinī*, 140.

59 *Manorathapūraṇī*, I, 60: *upakilitthan* [sic] *ti. upakkiliṭṭhaṃ nāmā ti. kathaṃ. yathā hi sīlavanto vā ācāra-sampannā mātā-pitaro vā ācariyupajjhāyā vā dussīlānaṃ durācārānaṃ avatta-sampannānaṃ puttānañ ceva antevāsika-saddhivihārikānañ ca vasena attano putte vā antevāsika-saddhivihārike vā na tajjenti na sikkhāpenti na ovadanti nānusāsantī ti avaṇṇaṃ akittiṃ labhanti. evaṃ sampadaṃ idaṃ veditabbaṃ. ācāra-sampannā mātā-pitaro viya hi ācariyupajjhāyā viya ca bhavaṅga-cittaṃ daṭṭhabaṃ. puttādīnaṃ vasena tesaṃ akitti-lābho viya javanakkhaṇe rajjana-dussana-muyhana-sabhāvānaṃ lobha-sahagatādi-cittānaṃ vasena uppannehi āgantukehi upakkilesehi pakati-parisuddhaṃ pi bhavaṅga-cittaṃ upakkiliṭṭhaṃ nāma hotī ti.*

60 *Atthasālinī*, 140: *tato nikkhantattā pana akusalam pi gaṅgāya nikkhantā gaṅgā viya godhāvarīto nikkhantā godhāvarī viya ca paṇḍaraṃ tveva vuttaṃ.*

54

PROTO-MĀDHYAMIKA IN THE PALI CANON

Luis O. Gómez

Source: *Philosophy East and West* 26 (1976): 137–65.

El que allí llega de vero
de sí mismo desfallesce;
cuanto sabía primero
mucho baxo le parece,
y su sciencia tanto cresce,
que se queda no sabiendo,
toda sciencia trascendiendo.

These words of Saint John of the Cross could be taken as the epitome of the wisdom of the mystics—beyond all human science, not to be grasped by rational discourse.[1] The mystic dwells in the unassailable fortress of his own silence. Unfortunately (or, perhaps rather fortunately), there is more than one way of abiding in the sublime bliss of the *silentium mysticum*, and more than one way to attain it. There are legitimate and spurious ecstasies, variously defined by different traditions. Moreover, whether he remains silent or speaks, the mystic cannot avoid returning to the province of worldly convention, where silence would speak as much as words. Silence is not univocal, nor is it noncommittal, yet the ineffable seems to require it. There is no reason for ignoring the beauty and mystery of this dilemma. This is the mystic bind, a tension that has not been ignored by more than one mystic tradition; thus there is the famous koan:

> Wu-tsu said: 'Traveling a road you meet a man of the Way, do not greet him with words nor with silence. But, tell me then, with what will you greet him?'

The equivocal nature of silence extends of course to the experience that evokes it, and nothing is gained by asserting that all mystics just preach and praise ultimate silence. Nor can we avoid the important role of doctrinal contents and framework in the formation and direction of a mystical path of silence.

The idea that one could escape the complexities of Buddhist thought, for example, by characterizing it as a *via mystica* or as a "yoga" would be rather simplistic. Even if the original "enlightenment experience" of the founder was an experience beyond all thought categories, it was nevertheless in some way specific. The experience behind the yoga is not contentless even when defined as such. This is not to say that the idea of a "doctrine of freedom from all conceptual contents" or "an experience free from the constraints of conceptual thought" is an impossibility. There is a certain specificity to silence, and to the very idea of the absence of a theoretical position; otherwise all the proponents of the *voie du silence* would have to agree with even their most vociferous opponents, and this has yet to happen.

In fact, not only is the mystical science of silence indeed a difficult science and a definite commitment to a specific mode of behavior or apprehension, there are also different modes of this "mystical science." The injunction to seek silence or to stop verbal profuseness can have more than one purpose, more than one intended meaning. Obviously, the mystics themselves consider that the insufficiency of language operates at more than one level. In this article a few of these levels will be considered in the very specific framework of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* of the *Suttanipāta*, while exploring possible parallels between this Pāli text and the *Madhyamaka* of Nāgārjuna.

At the outset I would like to suggest that we isolate, merely as a heuristic device, a few of the categories within which one could consider various Buddhist views (not always purely mystical) on the insufficiency, inadequacy, or obstrusiveness of words. These categories are not always mutually exclusive, but at the same time one does not necessarily lead to or contain the other. One could distinguish two greater categories: (1) The Buddhist, in attempting to explain the experience of the goal, or the goal itself, may and often does affirm that words cannot describe the goal (words cannot encompass the goal); and (2) in describing the path to that goal, he may insist that words are an impediment in the path (by words one does not reach the goal). To a greater or lesser extent most Buddhists agree on the first proposition, but their emphasis on the second and their interpretation of the connection between the first and the second differ radically from one school to another.

These two basic categories can be broken down in several ways. One could be tempted to think that "silence about the Buddha" is primarily ontological in purport and the "the Buddha's silence" is methodological in nature, but this is only partly true. Silence about the goal cannot be reduced to an ontological stance. This type of silence includes a very heterogeneous lot, for example, pragmatic silence as in the parable of the poisoned arrow[3]—a clear case of methodological silence. One may also subsume under the first category of silence about the goal the subclass of laudatory silence, as in those cases when we are simply told that the Buddha is so inscrutable that words are inadequate to praise him. There is also the silence of the Buddha himself, who "never preached a single dharma."[4] This class is inextricably related to both main

categories; but, though it spans both the goal and the path, it also includes the important class of silence as an element in the behavior which follows becoming a Buddha. Under silence about the goal the most important class is, nevertheless, ontological silence. The ultimate goal does not belong to the realm of the speakable. A Buddha cannot be reached "by the roads of speech."[5]

Our second main category, silence as part of the path, also may be taken to include a variety of doctrines about language. There is the pragmatic silence mentioned in the previous category: if speech is superfluous in the practice of the path, then it is merely a waste of time.[6] But speech can also be misleading, it could, by its very nature, lead astray the follower of the path. This quality of speech could be due to simple moral reasons or to psychological reasons or even to epistemological reasons. That is to say, talk could be an impediment because it is the epitome of the world's sham and frivolousness, as in "the most talked about," etc. Or it may be an impediment insofar as it leads to a mental distraction, agitation, and turbulence. Lastly, it could constitute an obstacle because it offers a semblance of reality, thus fooling the practitioner into complacently believing that he has seen face-to-face what he simply knows by words. The Buddhist scriptures move back and forth from one category to the other, perhaps with very good reasons, for thirst (*tṛṣṇā*) and nescience (*avidyā*) exist by mutual generation.[7]

Silence *about* and *in* the goal is mystical silence proper, that is, the *silentium myslicum*. But silence in the path could be described more accurately as "ascetic silence," that is, silence as a preparatory exercise (*propaedeutica mystica*).[8] Basically it falls into two classes: the path-silence proper which leads directly into mystical silence and moral or eremetical silence which simply prepares the environmental ground for the former.[9] Ascetic silence, for instance, can be a way of emptying the mind in order to make it receptive to an influx of external light, as in the infused contemplation of some of the Christian mystics. This type of ascetic silence is often connected to, but still separable from, the silence that stems from humility: the recognition of man's impotence before the might of God. These two differ from eremitical silence, the purpose of which is to retreat from worldly commitment and business, as in the *beatus ille qui procul negotiis*. But all these forms can and often do coalesce in one ascetic practice, often appearing in the instructions of the ascetics as interdependent and mutually reinforced.

Textual note

Some of these views on words and silence form the leading themes in the fourth book of the *Suttanipāta* and are found in several significant passages in the fifth book. The last two books of the *Suttanipāta, Aṭṭhakavagga* and *Pārāyanavagga*, respectively, constitute no doubt the oldest strata of the work and belong to the oldest of the Pāli texts.[10] The significance of these passages cannot be exaggerated. In many ways they anticipate (rather than foreshadow) some of the key

doctrines of the Great Vehicle and often help establish possible connections or smooth transitions from the Buddhism of the Nikāyas to the Buddhism of the Great Vehicle. One is tempted to discover here a *common ground*, unfortunately neglected by the Abhidharmist and long forgotten by the Great Vehicle.[11]

When I first read the *Mahāviyūha-sutta* of the *Suttanipāta* I was impressed not only by its freshness and directness, but also by its originality. Somehow its advocacy of abstention from disputes and arguments stood out as a unique stance that could not be easily reduced to a simplistic doctrine of abstention from disputes for the sake of the peace of noninvolvement. It also seemed evident that the pronouncements made in this *sutta* could not be reduced to other, more common teachings of the *Pāli Canon* without doing some violence to the text. Stock phrases which in the *Canon* were used to indicate the highest knowledge, such as "jānāmi passāmi" and "ñāṇa",[12] were used here to indicate the false science of those who were still attached to views. Moreover their attachment was not deemed to be merely the attachment to wrong views, but to views in general. Also, there was no question here of teaching the superior *dharma*, rather the point was that the true follower of the path would not prefer any dharma; he would make no claims to the possession of a higher dharma.[13]

Further consideration of *Suttanipāta* passages from the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and the *Pārāyana* showed that these two sections differ radically even from the rest of the *Sn* itself. The *Suttanipāta* passages we have considered in this article—mostly from the *Aṭṭhaka*—stand out among the Pāli texts much like the *Mahāviyūhasutta*. These passages strike the reader as some of the most explicit and representative statements of an extreme apophatic tendency found elsewhere in Buddhist literature. This tendency—or is it a contemplative tradition of some kind?—reappears later in the literature of the Perfection of Wisdom, and, even more patently, in the *Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika* and in the various Ch'an lines.

This tendency could be characterized in the theoretical realm as the doctrine, of no-views, and in the practical realm as the practice of practicing no dharmas. In its more extreme manifestations this tendency is diametrically opposed to the doctrine of right-views and the practice of gradually and systematically cultivating the true or pure dharmas. "Morally" it stands on an *ascetic discipline* of *silence* which corresponds and leads to the higher goal of silencing the mind's imaginative-discursive faculties, whereupon the mystic reaches the ultimate state of inner silence, considered to be itself beyond all possible theoretical description.

Contrary to the customary insistence on "right views" the *Aṭṭhakavagga* speaks of giving up *all* views. One cannot avoid feeling that the injunction of the Nikāyas to give up hankering for truth, views, morality, and vows is only taken in earnest in the *Aṭṭhaka*.[14] The men of wisdom are described again and again as those who do not find support or preference in anything:[15]

> They fancy not, they prefer not, and not a single dharma do they adopt. No true brahman can be led by vows or morality; he who is thus, gone beyond does not rely on anything. (803)[16]

Instructions to the follower of the path could not be more explicit:

> Renounce all vows and moralities, and [all] those acts, whether blamable or unblamable, throw away [all ideas of] purity and impurity, fare dispassionate, grasp not at peace. (900)

As we will see presently, this is no injunction to moral indifference. In what way is total renunciation like indifference?

How is this renunciation completed? The Suttanipāta shows that there is still more to deny in defining the path. This mystical science excludes all views and theories:

> Giving up assumption, unattached, he builds no reliance on knowledge itself . . . he does not rely on any view whatsoever. (800)[17]

This attitude, if we may describe it thus, has important behavioral consequences which the stanza summarizes with the phrase "he does not take sides among [those who uphold] the various assumptions."[18] But, for the time being, let us remain with the topic of not relying on views. This idea is in fact well known to us through the traditional doctrine of the Middle Path—avoiding the two extremes. Thus, not to rely on views is in a certain way a form of nondualism. However, one could not overemphasize the distinctive mark of the nondualism of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* (*Aṭṭha*).[19] As in so many passages from the Sūtra literature, the Middle Path is primarily the path of nonattachment. Such passages put on trial attachment and its destructive psychological effects, not the metaphysical validity of the two extremes. The mind moors in diverse opinions, clutches at them passionately. The clinging to views of this opinionated being is what perverts him; which opinion might be the "correct" one is *ultimately* irrelevant.

The *Aṭṭha*'s recommendation is to abandon this mooring or installation (*nivesana*) in views, this leaning toward the extremes of this or that, which is the result of the mind's forging an immutable apperception (saññā) of things. The truly wise are free of these fixations. According to the fourth poem of the *Aṭṭha*:

> He who has no leanings here to either of the two extremes: being or not being, here or beyond, he has no moorings whatsoever, no clutching while distinguishing among dharmas. (801)[20] He has not formed (or fancied) even the least apperception in what is here seen, heard or thought. . . . (802)[21]

He is not like those who are "entranced by the passion of their views" (891d).[22] For he knows that men are not released by means of opinions and theories:

> If a man were made pure by viewing, or if he could abandon sorrow by means of knowledge, then one still having additives (*sopadhiko*) would

> be purified by something other [than himself]. It is indeed mere opinion to speak thus. (789)[23] A true brahman is not called pure because of something other, whether seen or heard, whether vows of morality or something thought. [He lives] unsoiled by sin or merit, having given up assumptions, not fashioning any more here. (790)[24]

The *Mahāniddesa* fails to understand the true purport of this passage when it glosses: "If a man were made pure ... by another, impure path, by a false path ... other than the Noble Eightfold Path ..."[25] The very context of the whole poem (788–795, *Aṭṭha* section iv), shows that the view under attack is that of him who relies on knowledge (*pacceti ñāṇaṃ*) about things seen, heard or thought. Moreover, another stanza, from section xiv, confirms our interpretation:

> Only he should bring himself to rest, not elsewhere should the bhikkhu seek peace. For him who has brought himself to rest there are no assumptions whence, then, could there be non-assumption? (919)[26]

This emphasis on "self" in opposition to "other" has no immediate metaphysical implications. It is simply a forceful manner of expressing complete detachment from *all* dharmas:

> Whatever dharma he knows, whether in himself or outside, in it he makes no station; for the good do not call this true rest. (917)[27]
> Let him not by such [a dharma be led to] think that something is better, or worse, or even the same. Touched by multiple forms, let him remain without distinguishing or fancying (*vikappayan*) himself. (918)[28]

We may now return to section iv and let the concluding stanzas sum up the message of the poem:

> They do not fancy, they do not prefer, they do not say: 'This is total purification. Once free from the knotted knot of grasping, they have longing for nothing in the world. (794) Gone beyond all limits, a true brahman, he has no clutchings whether by knowing or seeing. He does not delight in passion nor does he delight in dispassion. For him there is nothing more to clutch at here. (795)[29]

The theme of grasping or clutching recurs throughout the *Aṭṭha*, and the root of this grasping is always presented as bound to opinions and talk. It is extremely difficult to go beyond our habitual mooring in views because of our habit of clutching at our distinctions among dharmas (801, 795ab). This grasping, moreover, is the cause of our delusion (841ab). Upon it a man builds his world of preferences, attachments, parties, contentions and disputes (862–873). But, what is the cause of our preferences and attachments? The misdirected

mind, specifically the wrongly applied faculty of apperception (*saññā*).[30] Apperception leads to dualities, graspings, conflicts, and sorrow because of its two primary functions: its power to conceptualize and define (*saṃkhā*) and its tendency toward division and multiplicity (*papañca*). The capacity of these faculties to generate friction and frustration is reinforced by the root apperception of "I" and "mine." The *Aṭṭha*, however, does not have a consistent doctrine on the question of what causes what, nor does it offer a complete or clear teaching on the role of the idea of a self or an "I." In one key passage it seems that the "I" idea and "thirst" have similar or rather parallel roles:

> Let him bring to a stop all the root of conception and dispersion, [that is,] the thought 'I am'. Whichever thirst there is in him let him drive away as he trains ever mindful. (916)[31]

Venturing a free gloss of this stanza; one may understand the process by which mindfulness destroys the moorings and hankerings of the mind in the following way: mindfulness pulls the mind back to the ever-fleeting present, away from its extensions into the past and the future.[32] In this way it acts in exactly the opposite direction of the process of apperception, and thus uproots conception (by which the "I" freezes reality to fit our views and desires) and dispersion (by which the mind runs out after things in order to make them "mine").[33]

In the extremely important, yet obscure final stanzas of the *Kalahavivāda-sutta* (*Aṭṭha*, poem xi), after a pithy description of how "form is made to cease"[34] by means of the control of apperception,[35] the poem concludes: "for dispersion with conception have apperception for their cause." (874)[36] The causal series presented in this poem reminds us of the one described in the *Sakka-pañhā-sutta* of the *Dīgha*:[37] both take human conflict and aggression as the final effect (not old age and death), both offer primarily psychological explanations of the problem, without explicit references to cosmological or eschatological conceptions. In both texts man's choosing between the dear and the not dear is at the root of friction and frustration, and this picking and choosing is rooted in wishing or wanting (*chanda*). In the *Dīgha, chanda* depends on *vitakka* (mental discourse), and *vitakka* depends on mental (and verbal) dispersion (*papañca*). The *Kalahavivāda* is more subtle, but also more repetitive and less linear. This is not the occasion to deal with this difficult passage in detail,[38] suffice it here to say that, according to this sutta, opinions and desire (or wishes: *chanda*) are equally rooted in the dualities of pleasant and unpleasant, coming to be and ceasing to be. These dualities are caused by contact (*phassa*), which here seems to be synonymous with appropriation and the idea of "mine." Contact depends on name and form, and name and form can be "made to cease"[39] by bringing about a change in the process of apperception. Thus, the calming or bringing to rest of the process of apperception which lies at the root of clinging, and therefore of suffering, is the ultimate goal of the way of silence. Not holding on to any view, not mooring in things seen, heard, or thought, quieting down all talk

(*vāda*) and contention (*vivāda*) is an important part in the process of quieting down affective and cognitive dispersion (*prapañca*); the other element in the process, mindfulness, is properly the instrumental arm by means of which the mind is brought to a state of emptiness from apperception. And this state of emptiness is the only state that is beyond suffering.

Having arrived at this juncture where the abandonment of views and opinions is justified in terms of its place in the process of overcoming suffering, we are introduced to another type of silence: the silence of the goal. The goal is clearly a state in which "name and form are no more." This is not a state of unconsciousness, obviously, but we must take a few lines to allow the *Sn* itself to dispel those suspicions of nihilism which are still provoked by the over-enthusiastic rhetoric of apophatic Buddhism.

Perhaps such suspicions are aroused with particular force by the deservedly famous *Upasīvamāṇavapucchā* of the *Pārāyana* (section vii: 1069–1076). There we are told how to reach release in the following words, which summarize much of what has been said above:

> Mindfully watching the [realm of] no-thing,[40] relying [only] on "there is not cross the flood. Giving up desire, detached from all talk, day and night look into the extinction of thirst. (1070) He who has left behind attachment to all desires, relying on no-thing, abandoning ought else, is released in the ultimate release from apperception. There he is firm, not to be followed. (1071)[41]

This passage should not be interpreted in terms of the meaning that its vocabulary has in other parts of the *Tipiṭaka*, but, if it is understood as literally as possible, it will reveal to us a fresh and illuminating message. The realm of no-thing (*ākiñcaññam*), for instance, cannot properly be construed as a reference to the classical hierarchy of the *samāpatti*. Here this "nothing" is at the very core and apex of the meditational path. It is that upon which the practitioner establishes his meditation. Giving up external perturbations (desire—talk) he mindfully looks into the empty, still point of his concentration. In order to look into this point he must rely on "no-thing" and give up everything else (sense objects, sensations, conceptions, etc.). This practice leads to release from apperception.

Is this then a state of unconsciousness? In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, one still finds the term *sañña* (*saṃjñā*) being taken to mean "consciousness."[42] That the meaning of the term is close to some of the Western philosophical uses of "apperception" is clear from the scholastic literature and from scattered contextual evidence.[43] In the *Sn, sañña* is the basis for conception and verbal distinctions (874), apperceptions are formed or fashioned (*pakappitā . . . saññā*) (802), they can be the object of attachment (792, 847), and together with views they are the primary object of grasping (847). It is also difficult to see how the term *saññā* could mean "perception" in the context of the *Sn*, where the *saññā* are found to be formed or fashioned by the mind, and where we are

told that dualities arise from the apperception of permanence (886). But then, is the *Upasīvamāṇavapucchā* speaking of a cessation of apperception or conceptualization when it defines the highest goal as "the release from *saññā*"? This question is best answered by the *Kalahavivāda*. The problem there is how to bring to rest all "name and form."[44] In other words, how do you stop the conflict of dualities which is at the root of all worldly conflicts? Form is made to cease in the following way according to the sutta:

> When he has not an apperception of apperceptions, when he had not an apperception of non-apperception, when he does not not apperceive, when he does not have apperceptions without an object, for him who has attained to this; form ceases, for apperception is the cause of dispersion and conception. (874)[45]

No matter how we interpret the term *saññā*, it is obvious that the paradoxical rhetoric of this passage does not justify assuming that the goal is in any way the mere stopping of mind processes or perception *tout court*.

Another passage in the *Aṭṭha* throws some light on the meaning of the abandonment of apperception. In the *Māgandiyasutta*, known by title to the compilers of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*,[46] the goal is described in the following terse lines:

> The truly wise does not form opinions on the basis of views or things thought out, he is not made thus. He would not be led by actions nor by learning, he would not be led to moorings of any kind. (846) For him who is detached from apperceptions there are no knots, released by insight he has no delusions. Those who hold on to apperceptions and views go around in the world in constant conflict. (847)[47]

The stopping of apperceptions follows the bringing to rest of all predispositions of the mind (732).[48] With this, all strife is ended:

> For nowhere in the world does the pure fashion views about being or non-being. The pure, having abandoned all sham and opinions, completely detached, who could reach him? (786) Attachment leads to talk about dharmas. How then, and who, could talk about the detached? For the has no assumptions, nor is he without assumptions; he is here cleansed of all view. (787)[49]

The clear emphasis on nonduality and freedom from opinions, freedom from talk (whether it be what the man released from apperception would have to say about the world, or what the world would have to say about *him*), is in fact quite apposite in the frame of reference of the path suggested in the *Aṭṭha*. The *Parāyana* uses a somewhat different terminology. There the *viññāṇa* is fixed in

becoming and is thus perturbed by becoming; the goal is to bring this *viññāṇa* to rest. This is not the place to discuss the meaning of this elusive term, but for the *Pārāyana* I find Hare's rendering quite appropriate ("mind at work"), and the usual "consciousness" very inappropriate.[50] Be that as it may, we are here concerned only with the fact that in the section on the questions of *Upasīva* (quoted earlier), the *Pārāyana* abstains from asserting the cessation of the *viññāṇa*, and actually speaks of a release from apperception (*saññāvimokhe*). Moreover, in this very same passage the question of language is brought up again in a manner reminiscent of the *Aṭṭha* and not so characteristic of the *Pārāyana*.

In the first place, the discipline of the path includes detachment from talk (*virato kathāhi*) (1070). In the second place, the goal, the highest release, is found in the release from apperception (1072). Lastly, the man who has attained to this goal is himself beyond the province of language and conception, he cannot be in any way described or defined:

> "... he who is thus cooled and released, is there for such a one any ideation (*viññāṇa*)?"
> "As a flame blown out by a gust of wind "ceases" and cannot be reached by conception, in the same way the muni, released from name and body, "ceases" and cannot be reached by conception." (1074)[51]
> He who has gone to cessation, is he no more? Or is he in eternal well being? ..." (1075)

"Of him who has gone to cessation there is no measure, there is nothing in terms of which they could speak about him. When all dharmas have been uprooted, all the ways of speech have also been uprooted." (1076)[52]

These lines bring to mind immediately the concluding lines of the *Kalahavivada*:

> Some wise men say that the highest here is the cleansing of the spirit, still others among [the wise] who call themselves experts on the "remainderless"[53] say that it is passing away. (876) But knowing that they rely still, the Muni knows and examines [the object of] their reliance.[54] The man who is released does not seek dispute, he does not give himself to becoming nor to non-becoming (877)

According to these passages, the way to the goal is a way of silence, the goal is beyond words, and the man of the goal is himself beyond all talk and speculation. Because an essential part of the solution to the problem of sorrow and conflict is the eradication of all "moorings of the mind", attachments to apperceptions, the path and the goal can best be described in terms of a non duality or middle path. The man of wisdom seeks to abandon the thirst for nonexistence as much as the thirst for becoming (856, 1068, 801). The path is also described in terms of this nonduality:

> Cleansing is not attained by things seen or heard, nor by knowledge, nor by the vows of morality, nor is it attained by not seeing or not hearing, nor by not knowing, nor by absence of morals and vows. Abandoning all these not grasping at them he is at peace, not relying, he would not hanker for becoming (839)[55]

It is again significant that the *Pārāyana*'s formulations of nonduality are often softer.[56] For instance, instead of speaking of not grasping at any dharma, as does the *Aṭṭha*, the *Pārāyana* says that the man of wisdom (here called *bhikkhu* in contrast to *brāhmaṇa*, which is more common in the *Aṭṭha*) is an expert in all dharmas (1039, 1112). The *Aṭṭha* is always very explicit about its radical views:

> When a man confined in views puts something first in the world as "the highest", calling all else "the lowest," he has not gone beyond dispute. (796) The experts call a knot (bond) that leaning on which one regards everything else to be lowly. Therefore the bhikkhu does not lean on anything seen, heard, or thought nor no morals and vows. (797)[57]
>
> Those who, grasping at views argue and say: "Only this is the truth," to them you should say when talk begins: "There are none here to reply to you in strife." (832) But those who do follow a path of not taking sides, who do not oppose views by means of views, from them who will you obtain, Pasūra, from them who here do not have a "highest" to grasp at? (833)[58]

In conclusion, it is obvious then that the *Aṭṭha*'s intention is not to propose a different view. Nor does it propose a nonview (systematic rejection of all views). The involved rhetoric of this short text seems to be aimed at an injunction to detachment from the tendency of the mind to become fixed in cognitive and affective extremes, in immutable mind-made polarities. I do not believe we could consistently interpret the *Aṭṭha* as the pronouncement of a self-serving Buddhist who believes that the clash of views is counterproductive merely because there is only one correct view and that he who possesses that view (that is, the Buddhist) can afford not to enter the ring of dispute, for, after all, he knows that he is right. No, we have in the *Aṭṭha* a doctrine of nonduality, found elsewhere in the *Pāli Canon* only sporadically. Whether the practice of such a doctrine is humanly possible is another question, which is not the concern of this article.

The *Aṭṭha* does, however, point at a possible reason why such a doctrine is necessary:

> There are not in fact many and various truths, except for the worldly apperception of "permanents." Fashioning arguments on views, they pronounce a duality of dharmas: "true and false." (886)[59]

The holding on to these apperceptions of immutable principles or objects is growing roots in mere figments of the imagination. The stability of these principles is deceptive, for they are in fact wrought by an unstable mind:

> Who still has principles (*dhammā*) fashioned, constructed, prejudiced and not cleansed, when he sees advantage in assumption, he is [only] relying on a "peace" which depends on agitation. (784)[60]
>
> The defender of views, of course, favors his own views above all others (904), but,
>
> The true brahman does not attach himself to fancies or concepts, he does not regard any view as all important, nor is he a friend of knowledge. Yet, having known the opinions of men at large, he regards even-mindedly the extremes at which others clutch. (911)[61]
>
> Whatever opinions are held by men at large, he, having known, does not form attachment to any of them. Why should the unattached seek attachment, he who does not give in to things seen or heard? (897)[62]

But together with its pronouncements on views and talk, the *Aṭṭha* weaves in important contemplative and moral (or, perhaps better, ascetic) recommendations. Mooring in views, grasping at apperceptions, is not fundamentally a cognitive process and it must be stopped by a specific method of ascetic training.

> One should train ever mindful, driving out whatever thirst there is within. (916cd)
>
> Touched by multiple forms, he will not make a station in them fancing himself [as this] or that. (918cd)[63]
>
> He should grow calm in himself, the bhikkhu would not seek peace from something else. . . . (919ab)

These lines are followed by specific instructions on how to attain "calm within himself":

> His eyes do not roll about,[64] he turns his ear away from village talk, he does not hanker after flavors, nor does he consider as "mine" anything in the world. (922)
>
> He does not gather and make store of things to eat, drink, chew, or wear, nor is he afraid of not obtaining these. (924)
>
> Let him be intent on contemplation, not loitering around, let him put a stop to worrying, let him not be unheedful. He will seek to dwell in a spot where noises are few. (925)
>
> He would not be led to speaking falsehood, ever watchful, he is free of sham and malice,[65] he will not despise others for their way of life, for their wisdom, for their morals or vows. (931)

But the most characteristic elements in the conduct of the sage are his non-grasping at the ideas of 'me' and 'mine' and the resulting detachment from views, opinions, and comparative judgments:

> He who has no idea of 'mine' in all names and forms, nor grieves at what is not, he loses nothing in the world. (950)
> For whom there is no 'this is mine' or 'another's is that' with respect to anything, he has found nothing to make into 'mine' and never grieves 'this is not mine' (951)
> The muni does not speak of 'equal', 'low' or 'high'; serene, having left all egotism behind, he does not grasp at anything nor does he reject anything. (954)

This man who does not form a support on anything is then free from the thirst to become one thing or stop being another. (856)[66] He is no longer attached to views and opinions, which are nothing but our attempt to fashion the world in our own image. Calm, free of desire to become, of desire to establish himself, he turns away from talks and disputes (859); he is in fact beyond talk, for his virtues, his calm, and his detachment do not belong to the province of talk and conception (913–914, 876–877, 1076).

The distinctive moralizing tone of many passages in the *Aṭṭha* cannot be overlooked. At times one cannot avoid the feeling that the whole discourse is about the bliss of escaping worldly noise and strife. One is reminded of the words of Fray Luis de Leon:

> ¡Qué descansada vida
> la del que huye del mundanal rüido,
> y sigue la escondida
> senda por donde han ido
> los pocos sabios que en el mundo han sido![67]

But the passages we have quoted above should convince the reader that the moralizing and the praise of the hermit's life are, in fact, ancillary to a more fundamental message. Views and disputes are not simply abandoned out of the convenience and peace of *la vida retirada*; at their roots is a fundamental error, wrong apperception, and a fundamental moral wrong, clinging to 'I' and 'mine'. Views and disputes are the external signs of passionate apperception; talking, opinionating, gimmicking are the signs of inner turbulence and crazy grasping. The path recommended in the *Aṭṭha* is then a path of detachment, but primarily of detachment through silence, outer and inner silence.

Moreover, the goal itself is very appropriately a state of silence in the sense that the apperceptive faculty is "calmed into submission." At this stage the mind rests only on its silent center. Because it clings now to no apperception, because it is free of dispersions and fixations, there is no way that it, the mind itself, can

be described or pinpointed by the way of talk or concept. Thus, the primary purpose of methodological silence is not disengagement or solitude but the discovery of the inner silence which is calm.

With regard to ontological silence, the *Aṭṭha* does not present a full theory in the sense of a metaphysical edifice or groundwork for the ineffability of the ultimate goal. Nor can we interpret the *Aṭṭha* in terms of a given right-views theory. In other words, the *Aṭṭha* is not proposing an indirect or preparatory means of establishing or cultivating a specific right view, nor a world view which must be hidden under the mantle of silence or protected from the worldly by reserving it for only those who are worthy of it. What is found in the *Aṭṭha* is (1) a psychology of human friction and frustration, and (2) a few pointers to a human condition beyond the present state of friction and frustration—all of which can be summarized in an injunction to practice a type of silent mindfulness and concentration, in which no specific view is to be sought or upheld.

Thus, the *Aṭṭha*'s doctrine of silence is in no way empty of a theory. There is, certainly, a basic theory with regard to clinging and the ineffability of non-clinging. The *Aṭṭha*'s doctrine, however, is a 'no-doctrine" in the sense that someone who accepts this doctrine is expected to have an attitude with respect to it which is precisely the contrary of what we normally expect from someone who espouses a theory. And this is not the philosophical silence of skepticism nor the methodological bracketing of the phenomenologist. It is the simple fact that to be practically consistent, a theory of the silencing of the moorings of apperception must be self-abrogating. Thus, the theory is incomplete without the practice because theory cannot silence itself by itself. It must culminate in a practice which will bring its consummation by consuming it.[68]

Comparative note

One is of course immediately tempted to compare the religion without an ultimate concern of the *Aṭṭha* with the speculative flights of the Mādhyamika. There too *prapañca* and *adhiniveśa* stand out as two of the main enemies.[69] There too all views (*dṛṣṭi*) are to be given up for the sake of a goal about which the Great Sage never pronounced a single word.

According to the *Prasannapadā* (*Pras* 351),[70] emptiness is also called *nirvāṇa* because it is defined as the stopping of all mental and linguistic dispersion (*prapañca*). This dispersion is nothing but talk, the talk that chains men to things (*Pras* 373, 448); it involves the conflict between the multiple polarities that define things in the world:

> knowledge and the knowable, speakable and speaker, doer and act, cause and effect, jars, clothes, crown and chariots, form and sensation, women and men, gain and loss, happiness and sorrow, fame and disrepute, blame and praise, etc. . . . (350)

When the mind seizes at things there is this dispersion (350–351) from which results the mind's uncontrolled fancying (*ayoniśo vikalpa*: 350–351, 374, 452).[71] As part of this mental disorder, mooring (*abhiniveśa*) in the ideas of 'I' and 'mine' grows; and this is the root of the perturbation of the *kleśas*, which is the cause of rebirth. (351) Only when seizing at an immutable form for things ceases, through the vision of emptiness, does the whole series end. (350–351).

The goal then is to put to rest all seizing or apprehending (*sarvopalambhopaśamah*: xxv. 24a), putting to rest the dispersions of the mind (*prapañcopaśamah*: xxv. 24b). This goal is not defined by any ultimate principle, the Buddha in fact never taught a single dharma (xxv. 24cd). For what is sought is the bringing to calm of the harborings of the mind. The Mādhyamika seeks to stop all apprehensions of an immutable reality, thing or principle, all apperceptions of being and not being, coming to be and ceasing to be. For,

> When no being is obtained, which one could imagine not to exist, then, deprived of all basis, how could non-being stand before the mind? When neither being nor non-being stand before the mind, then, having no where else to go, without support, the mind is brought to rest.[72]

Thus, the true function of emptiness is to free the mind of its own harborage and hankering. Emptiness, then, cannot constitute itself a view, a principle; it cannot be reified if it is to fulfill its liberating role:

> The non-operation of all views which is the escape from all grasping and mooring, that is here emptiness. (247)
> Emptiness, wrongly perceived brings destruction. . . . (xxiv. 11)
> The conquerors describe emptiness as the escape from all views, but those for whom emptiness is a view, they are called 'incurable'. (xiii. 8)
> The Master spoke of the abandonment of both coming to be and ceasing to be therefore, nirvāṇa cannot be appropriately called neither being nor non-being (xxv. 10)
> Ultimately, truth is beyond the reaches of knowledge itself, beyond all speech. (374)
> When the mind processes [of fancying and apprehending] are no more, whence would there be a superimposition of signs (*nimitta*), without this [superimposition] whence would there be the process of speech. It is therefore firmly established that the Blessed Buddhas have never taught anything. (364)

A Buddha is free of all fancying and mental fashioning. He is therefore beyond all speech. He never preached any dharmas. (366)

Furthermore, nothing can be said about the Buddha. Those who believe that they can come to understand the Buddha through the prolixity of their talk and

speculation have not seen the Buddha in truth (xxii. 15). They are like blind men looking at the sun. (448)[73]

The Mādhyamika doctrines referred to above are all strongly reminiscent of the *Aṭṭha*. Yet, there are no parallels in the *Aṭṭha* corresponding to the philosophical groundwork of the *Madhyamaka*. We miss the rhetoric of the tetralemma, the ontological framework of causation and dependent origination, the double truth, etc. It is true that the analogy does not break down because of these differences; the basic elements which we recognized in the *Aṭṭha* are for the most part in the *Madhyamaka*: silence as a part of the way to calming the workings of wrong apprehension, a goal beyond all talk and the conqueror of the goal who is beyond all description or verbal apprehension. And these are, no doubt, characteristic of and central to the teachings of both *Aṭṭha* and *Madhyamaka*. Yet, the differences that exist are seldom unimportant, though they may be considered subtle or marginal to the religious quest.

The radical statement of "Buddha's silence" as found in the *Madhyamaka* is not to be found anywhere in the *Aṭṭha*, or, for that matter, in the whole Pāli Canon. One thing is to say that Buddhas do not cling to views and do not enter into disputes, and another is to say that from the moment of his awakening the Buddha never spoke a word. It is not only a question of emphasis or rhetorical pyrotechnics. There is an important philosophical difference. In the first case we are dealing with a very concrete description of the way to do something and of the results that follow, in the second case we are dealing with the ontological explanation and justification of the experience and its value.

We find agreement on the fact that truth is not multiple (*Madhyamaka* xviii. 9, *Aṭṭha* 886ab), but the *Aṭṭha* makes no attempt to define the one truth. The *Madhyamaka*, it is true, ends up by declaring that the one truth is neither truth, nor untruth, etc. (xviii. 8), but the point is that while Nāgārjuna seeks to establish dialectically and ontologically the value and significance of non-apprehension, the *Aṭṭha* is taking that very nonapprehension as the point of departure for *practical* injunctions. The *Aṭṭha* requires silence because it contributes to final calm and release, the Mādhyamika, because all dharmas are beyond speech, ineffable, empty and from the beginning pure (*Pras.* 539).

The *Aṭṭha* does not seem to be at all concerned with the existence of a formed body of Buddhist doctrines (if there was one of them), or with the possibility that these doctrines could be incompatible with its teachings of nonduality, whereas Nāgārjuna is patently conscious of the conflict. On the one hand, he seeks to derive as much as possible of his doctrine from the rhetoric of older speculations and dogmas. On the other hand, he is forced to construct a hierarchy of two levels of truth, by means of which he will secure a place among Buddhist "truths" to the specifics of the path as taught in the sūtras.

It is true that the "ultimate truth" of the *Madhyamaka* is beyond all words and understandings (*Pras.* 493) and is thus placed on a similar position as the goal of the *Aṭṭha*; but the moment that a "conventional truth" is posited the situation changes. This conventional truth or transactional truth (*vyavahāra*) is a

necessary element in the plan of the path, for without it one could never reach the ineffable ultimate (xxiv. 10). Such subtleties are a far cry from the direct and simple injunction to silence of the *Aṭṭha*. The "double truth" could imply, Nāgārjuna's protestations notwithstanding, the hypostatizing of silence.[74] The *Aṭṭha* is content with freely jumping from silence to speech, Nāgārjuna is still concerned with the inconsistency. In other words, the *Aṭṭha* seems to have understood effortlessly that silence is not to be reified, that mystical silence is not literal or physical silence. The Mādhyamika, on the other hand, requires the most abstruse rhetoric to wrestle with the dilemma of words vs. silence.

But the greatest difference between the two doctrines lies in their points of departure. The *Aṭṭha* sets out to find (or describe) a practical solution to human sorrow, not merely the abstract sorrow of rebirth, but the everyday sorrow of strife and aggression. Nāgārjuna sets out to prove that all dharmas lack self-subsistence (*niḥsvabhāvādharmāḥ*). This leads to a concern with conduct in the case of the *Aṭṭha*, and, on the other hand, a concern with dialectics in the case of Nāgārjuna.[75]

Speculative note

In conclusion, the *Aṭṭha*'s "theory of no-theory" can be compared rather successfully with the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika stand. Parallels between the two doctrines become more obvious and valuable if we are willing to concede that the practical motivations or imperatives behind the Mādhyamika are close to those of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. Moreover, the Mādhyamika's opposition to the dharma and *svalakṣaṇa* theories of the Abhidharmists is thoroughly consistent, though by no means identical with the *Aṭṭha*'s rejection of all mooring in dharmas.

At this point several highly speculative questions arise. First, do we have in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* an early example of a continuous tradition of apophatic Buddhism? If so, could we be justified in speaking of a "protomādhyamika" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*? Last, what is the historical connection, if any, of this proto-Mādhyamika and a possible Indian "proto-Ch'an"? There is more than one reason why these legitimate historical questions must remain in the speculative realm. One does not have to bring back to life the specter of "original Buddhism" to be able to speak of earlier or latter strata in the Canon, and the *Aṭṭha* no doubt belongs to the earliest.[76] The words "earliest" or "quite early," however, do not mean much in terms of absolute chronology, nor do they in the least, help to clarify the *Aṭṭha*'s doctrinal or historical role in the development of Buddhist dogmatics. Moreover, the propriety of the term "protomadhyamika" depends also on the establishment of a definite connection between the *Aṭṭha* and the Mādhyamikas. One first step in this direction would be to show that Nāgārjuna knew the *Aṭṭhakavagga* or that he belonged to a monastic or contemplative tradition stemming from a religious milieu close or identical to that of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. Although the later seems likely, it is a thesis falsification insofar as reliable spiritual lineages and hagiographies are wanting. As to Nāgār-

juna's knowledge of the Pāli Canon, it seems quite obvious that he must have known some form of the *Saṃyukta* and the *Madhyama Āgamas*, and by implication we may conclude that he knew the other *Āgamas*, but there is no foolproof way of determining specifically which were the texts he was familiar with. Most certainly he believed that the *avyākṛtāni* held much of the key to understanding the whole of the Buddha's message, but there is no way of ascertaining whether the *Aṭṭha* was in anyway pivotal to his exegesis of the canonical texts.

If the connection with Nāgārjuna is difficult, or impossible to establish, any connection with the Ch'an tradition must remain in the realm of pure speculation.[77] It is somewhat suggestive that some Indian masters found Ch'an congenial to their view of the path. It is also interesting to note that as Mādhyamika turned toward a *svātantrika* position, and its abhidharmic traits became stronger, it eventually found itself in frank opposition to the no-doctrine path of Ch'an at the bSam-yas debate ("Council of Lhasa").

In the present state of our knowledge it would be more reasonable to discard the possibility of a one-line transmission and assume that the apophatic teachings of the *Aṭṭha*, the Mādhyamika and, perhaps, the Ch'an, represent one *type* of path theory. It is also more accurate to envision this type not as a unique and isolated phenomenon, but rather as one tendency among others that grew among a complex of doctrinal attempts to define, refine, or map out the Buddhist mystical path.

Thus, in spite of the differences and difficulties outlined above, the *Mādhyamaka* and the *Aṭṭha* both belong to the same *type* of Buddhist tradition with regard to the value of views and the function of conceptual thought. This is the same type to which such traditions as the Ch'an belong, and which is characterized by the rejection of *all views*: views are not given up for the sake of right views, what is to be abandoned is attachment to views. Because such interpretation of the path presupposes the goal of complete eradication of the conceptual harborages of the mind, it is often connected to a doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* or "leap theory" of release. This class of Buddhist plans of the path should be contrasted to the "right-views" theories in which the cultivation of right views and the gradual transformation of mind is emphasized.[78] There are, of course, intermediate types, such as we find in the latter *Mādhyamika* of the Bhāvanākramās. While most Buddhists agree that the goal is beyond words, the issue is whether the transition from specific verbal directives or descriptions of the path to its consummation in the final face-to-face experience of the goal is best understood as a quantitative transformation or as a qualitative leap.

The problem for the gradualist is the textual and philosophic tradition which states that all dharmas, being interdependent, are empty, therefore ungraspable and from the beginning at peace. Such doctrines seem to exclude the possibility or functional value of a gradual path, or of any path at all.[79] By the same token, the "leap theory" must explain how it is that specific actions must precede awakening and the final obtainment of the goal. If no specific steps are called for how is it that not everyone is immediately liberated?[80]

The *Madhyamaka* attacks the problem by using the traditional abhidharmic understanding of the middle path as *pratītya-samutpāda*. Causal connection guarantees the specificity of the path. However, Nāgārjuna is forced to bring in his double-truth theory to save this very causal connection after he has undermined it through his critique of self-subsistence (*svabhāva*). The *Aṭṭha*, on the other hand, never considers these problems. Perhaps, if we had to get an answer from the *Aṭṭha*, we could assume that the answer is to be found in the fact that true nonclinging to views includes the negation of all hypostases of *negation* neither attached to passion nor attached to dispassion (*Aṭṭha* 795, 813; et al.). In the end, in spite of all his scholastic efforts, Nāgārjuna would probably agree with the *Aṭṭha*, for neither of the two is proposing calm and silence as a reifiable absolute but as a self-abolishing directive to nonclinging. In principle, the problem of the function of the path in emptiness never should have arisen, but precisely because negation is in no way univocal, it had to arise. The fundamental illusions which are at the root of samsaric bondage belong to the realm of language and conceptualization. But silence by itself leads nowhere, first, because the process of conceptualizing is indissolubly connected with a basic state of thought and speech dispersion (*prapañca*) which is *affective* as well as cognitive, and second, because silence itself belongs to the realm of speech.

Thus, our picture of the Middle Path would be incomplete and unfaithful if we were to overemphasize the cognitive aspect (*avidyā*) at the expense of the affective (*tṛṣṇā*), or if we were to take the directive to silence as an injunction to live in the bliss of the deaf and the mute. The wrongly directed minding (*ayonisomanasikāra*), which is at the base of the agitation of becoming, must be uprooted by a complete bringing to rest of clinging, *affective and cognitive*. The pitfall of mystical ineffability is that the directive to silence, if understood at a purely cognitive level, could be reified and transformed into a new apprehension of speech, a source of further dispersion of thought and wordiness. The directive of the *Aṭṭha* thus comes close to that of the *Mādhyamaka*: to take the pronouncements on emptiness as the true view is to moor in emptiness as if it were another object for clinging. But, unlike the *Mādhyamaka*, the *Aṭṭha* very aptly emphasizes the connection between conduct (abstention from strife, dispute, and frivolous talk) and meditation (mindfulness, contemplation) on the one hand, and the abandonment of clinging to views, on the other. That is, the *Aṭṭha* clearly sees the interconnectedness of the various levels of silence. The *Madhyamaka* lacks such a perception; but Nāgārjuna's masterwork is an attempt at grounding the practice in a philosophical rhetoric, it is not a guide to practice. We should not make too much of its silence with respect to the affective and practical side of nonclinging, or assume that Nāgārjuna was ignorant of this important aspect of Buddhism as a path of liberation.

In conclusion, one should not be too harsh with Nāgārjuna. Many of the passages from the *Aṭṭha* that we have discussed above cannot be harmonized in any way with much of what is found in the abhidharma tradition of the Hinayāna, against which, no doubt, Nāgārjuna was reacting in the spirit of a tradition close

to that of the *Aṭṭha*. In his study on *prapañca* and *saññā*, Ñāṇānanda makes it a point to criticize the Mādhyamika for its excessive dialecticism.[81] I tend to agree with his stance in this regard, something of the spirit of the Tripiṭaka is lost among so much dialectical flourish, but I cannot avoid feeling that Ñāṇānanda has chosen the wrong man to pick on. It is true that both the Prajnāpāramitā and the Mādhyamika (and later, in a similar spirit, even Ch'an) tend to fall (almost addictively) into formulistic word games and overlook the simple, practical recommendations of *some* of the passages in the Pāli Canon, especially in the Nikāyas. But, then, the same accusation could be made against the whole of Buddhism, much of the Tripiṭaka included. The religion which rose out of the Buddha's silence is no doubt one of the most verbose, abstruse and pedantic of them all. And this applies in particular to the abhidharma that Nāgārjuna was attempting to refute. In many ways, Buddhism has failed to follow the advice of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*: to keep away from contentions and disputes by not grasping at views.

Summary and conclusions

Early Buddhist views on the role of language and theorization do not contain anything comparable to a theory of language. With the exception of the older parts of the *Suttanipāta* (*Aṭṭhakavagga* and *Pārāyana*) and scattered passages in the Nikāyas, the Pāli tradition has adopted a view of *avidyā* which suggests a condemnation of specific theories or views, rather than an outright rejection of the clinging to theorizing and opinionating. The ineffability of the goal is not taken to imply the impossibility of theorization (as in the Mādhyamika), and theorization is not seen as inextricably connected to clinging (as in the *Suttanipāta*). Nevertheless, the Pāli tradition preserves, in the *Suttanipāta* and elsewhere, several important passages in which one could perhaps discover some kind of "proto-Mādhyamika."[82] These classic lines suggest, however, several interpretations, not all of which lead necessarily to a Mādhyamika position.

The Pāli tradition contains in the first place (and in a considerable majority of the cases) passages which approach the question of languages from a variety of ontological angles, namely: from a moral perspective (slander, falsehood, etc., as generators of unwholesome roots), from the perspective of the prophylaxis of meditation (frivolous talk destroys calm and concentration), from the point of view of established doctrinal truth (one should not adopt or promulgate false teachings), etc. But the least frequent passages are of greater interest. These we have placed into two basic categories: (1) goal-silence (the goal is utterly undescribable) and (2) path-silence (talking and theorizing are obstacles in the path).

The various levels at which these views on language and conceptualization are developed do not necessarily meet in the texts and conceivably could be considered or accepted separately and disconnectedly, as they often are. However, they could all fall into one pattern built around the ineffability of the goal. And this happens in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, where the root of suffering and becoming is

discovered in the mind's tendency to passionately cling to its own fancies: its own prolific conceptualizations, rooted in wrong apperception, (*saññā*). This view of the position of the conceptual process in the plan of the path is theoretically close to Nāgārjuna, and in this sense one could easily interpret most of the authentic works of Nāgārjuna as consistent with at least one non-Mahāyāna tradition.[83] Or one could propose a type or tendency common to both the *Aṭṭha* and Mādhyamika surviving also in isolated passages in the Nikāyas, such as some canonical interpretations of the 'indeterminables (*avyākṛtāni*).

However, one all important difference subsists between the *tone* of the *Aṭṭha* and that of the *Madhyamaka*. Some key passages from the *Aṭṭha* could be called "proto-Mādhyamika" passages in the sense that they anticipate some of the axial concepts of the Mādhyamika. The *Aṭṭha*, however, contains explicit directives, consonant with its moralizing tone, for the eradication of clinging and the abandonment of theorization, and clearly makes way for a corresponding contemplative and ascetic practice. References to this practice are absent in the *Madhyamaka* and scarce in the other works of Nāgārjuna.[84]

Moreover, the theoretical framework of the Mādhyamika is totally absent from the *Aṭṭha*. The twofold truth, emptiness, causation, and dependent origination, the indeterminables, the tetralemma, the equivalence of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, are conspicuous by their absence.

But then, perfect correspondence would be just that, and not anticipation Whether one is willing to bestow the honorific of "proto-Mādhyamika" on the *Aṭṭha* depends mainly on whether one is willing to recognize the practical core around which Nāgārjuna's dialectical edifice has been built.

Notes

1 The stanza is from St. John's poem "Coplas del mismo hechaş sobre un éxtasis de harta contemplación", pp. 410–412 in Ruano's edition: Crisógono de Jesus, Matias del Niño Jesús, y Lucinio Ruano, *Vida y obras de San Juan de la Cruz, Doctor de la Iglesia Universal*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1972). The lines can be prosaicly translated: "He who truly arrives there, will loose consciousness of himself; whatever he used to know now seems insignificant to him, yet his science grows so much that afterwards he remains knowing, even beyond all science." The gulf that separates the Christian mystic's view of silence and ignorance as conditions of the mystic path and goal from that of the Buddhist can be fully appreciated by perusing St. John's remarks in *Noche oscura*, I. 10 ff., II. 11 ff., these chapters are analyzed in Leonard A. McCann, *The Doctrine of the Void in St. John of the Cross* (Toronto: Basilian Press, 1955). Compare also, St. John's comments on the lines ". . . la musica callada, la soledad sonora, . . ." in *Càntico espiritual*, canciones 14 y 15, sec. 25–26, in Ruano. Also, *Dichos de luz y amor*, 131, and Federico Ruiz-Salvador, *Introduction a San Juan de la Cruz* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1968), pp. 99–104, 429–442.

2 *Wu-mên-kuan*, case xxxvi. Furuta Shōkin, *Mumonkan*, (Kyōto: Kadogawa Bunsho, 1968), p. 124. The problem of words and silence is repeatedly taken up in the Ch'an tradition, confer, for example, the *locus classicus* in Yüan-wu's comments on the *Pi-yen lu*'s case lxv (pp. 269–278 in Asahino Sōgen's edition, *Hekigan-roku* (Tōkyō:

Iwanami Shoten, 1937). In this passage the simplistic stereotype of Ch'an's aversion to words is exposed for what it is. There is a parallel case in *Wu-men-kuan* xxxii; also compare case xxiv. Yüan-wu, by the way, chastises Vimalakīrti for his superficial "answer" to Mañjusri's question. Important desiderata in this area of Ch'an are studies of the *mo-chao ch'an* and *k'an-hua ch'an* conflict and, of course, on the *yen-ch'üan kung-an* (*gosen koan*).

3 *Majjhima Nikāya*, I. 426–432.

4 The Pāli Canon never used such a strong formula to express the ineffability of the Buddhist message. The stronger form is clearly Mahāyāna. The classical statement is found in *Prasannapada*, p. 366, a passage quoted by Bu-ston to show that sectarian and school differences in Buddhism are "ultimately" meaningless.

5 See our comments on *Suttanipāta* 1076, below. The "roads of speech" are also mentioned in the *Kaśyapaparivarta*, section 125: "He does not moor in Dharma even in terms of dispassionateness, how much less then by the utterances of the roads of speech!" (*vākpathodāharena*). Compare *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 11.9, where the Tathagata is said to be *vādapathātivatta*. Also compare, *Gaṇḍavyūha* (Vaidya) pp. 17, 21, 22 and 184, *Daśabhūmika* (Kondo) p. 14, *Pañcaviṃśatī*, p. 212, and *Aṣṭādaśa*, folio 253a.

6 Cf. the interpretation of *prapañca* as "delay" or "obstacle" in the *Pali Text Society Dictionary*, s.v. Also, compare, *Pañcaviṇiśati* pp. 200, 491–492, and *Aṣṭādaśa* f. 250a.

7 *Itivuttaka*, p. 34; *Abhidharmakośa*, III. vs. 27–29 and VI. vs. 3 (corresponding to L. de: la Vallée-Poussin, III. pp. 69–72, 88–91, and VI. pp. 136–139.

8 E. Cornelis, in his *Valeurs chrétiennes des religions non chrétiennes* (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1965), p. 162, mentions the fact that Jaspers considers "que la sécheresse même des nomenclatures de *l'abhidharma* est un procédé stylistique exactement adapté aux nécessités d'une propédeutique au silence mystique." Unfortunately no reference is given.

9 The distinctions we have drawn here seem to be purely a priori or, better, formal and similarities on this point do not contain necessary material implications. Some of these distinctions are made explicitly by St. John in *Subida del Monte Carmelo*, III. 11.1, "... para que el alma se venga a unir con Dios en esperanza, ha de renunciar toda posesión de la memoria, pues que, para que la esperanza sea entera de Dios, nada ha de haber en la memoria que no sea Dios; y'como (tambièn hemos dicho) ninguna forma, ni figura, ni imagen, ni otra noticia que pueda caer en la memoria sea Dios ni semejante a El, ahora celestial, ahora terrena, natural o sobrenatural ... de aqui es que, si la memoria quiere hacer alguna presa de algo desto, se impide para Dios; ..." Similar considerations appear in, op. cit., III. 3.13, 5.3, and passim. For mystical silence, cf. *Llama de amor viva*, 2.21, and *Dichos de luz y amor*, 27, 99, and, on the *anagoge*, 138. On ascetic silence, see *Subida*, III. 3, 4, 5.1–2, and 9; *Dichos*, 117, 121, 155, 179, and St. John's letter of 22 November 1587 to the nuns at Beas, in Ruano, p. 371. In some of these passages ascetic and eremitic silence are not separated in any way, as is to be expected.

10 Regarding the age of the *Suttanipāta* and the "*Arthavargīya*" see the summary of the question in Yamada Ryūjō, *Daijō Bukkyō Seiritsu Ron Josetsu, Shiryō Hen: Bongo Butten no Shobunken*, (Kyōto: Heirakuji, 1959), pp. 54–55 (on *Arthavargīya*), 25–27 and 48 (on *Suttanipāta*).

11 In the scholastic literature, the *Suttanipāta* is quoted extensively only in the paracanonical work *Nettipakaraṇa* (canonical in Burma). There is, however, one full commentary attributed to Buddhaghosa, the *Paramatthajotikā* (the first part of which is dedicated to the *Khuddakapaṭha*), and commentaries to books IV (*Aṭṭhakavagga*) and V (*Pārāyanavagga*), the *Mahā-* and *Cūla-Niddesa*, respectively (both canonical).

12 *Sn*, 908, 911. Henceforth all references to *Suttanipāta* will be given with the abbreviation *Sn* followed by the stanza number, according to the Pali Text Society edition, or simply with the stanza number when the context leaves no doubt about the source.

13 *Sn* 905 and passim.

14 On the traditional *dṛṣṭi-śīlavrata-parāmarśa*, cf. *Abhidharmakośa*, V. 7–8. But also compare *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (henceforth, *AN*), II., p. 42: "kāmesanā bhavesanā brahmacariyesanā saha iti saccaparāmāso diṭṭhithana samussaya"; *AN*, III. p. 377, *Majjhima-Nikāya* (henceforth, *MN*), I., p. 433, *Digha-Nikāya* (henceforth, *DN*), III., p. 48, etc. Compare the use of *upādāna* in *MN*, I., pp. 50–51: "kāmupādānaṃ diṭṭhupādānaṃ sīlabbatupādānaṃ attavādupādānaṃ", also, *MN*, I., pp. 95–97. Detachment from all virtues and convictions is also prescribed by St. John. Confer, for example, *Subida del Monte Carmelo*, Book II, i.2, xxix.8, and III, iii.3 and ix.3, but contrast Book II, xvii.4 and also *Cautelas*, 3, and *Cántico Espiritual*, iii.3. the inconsistencies in St. John clearly are due to reasons quite different from the ones behind similar inconsistencies in Buddhism, see, for example, *Subida* II, vi, 1 ff. and *Noche Oscura*, I, vi.8. The relinquishment of virtue is not to be construed as antinomianism; in Buddhism the number of texts substantiating this point are legion. Perhaps one of the most apposite *loci classici* is the *Samaṇamaṇḍikasutta* (*MN*, II., pp. 22–29).

Śīla-vrata (*sīlabbata* or *sīlavata*) could be read as a determinative or a copulative compound, but in *Sn* 839 the word is broken up as a copulative. The word *śīla*, incidentally, is also closer to the etymological meaning of our words moral and morality (*mores*) than to the contemporary usage of these terms.

15 In quotations, the stanza number will follow each stanza being quoted.

16 A number of difficulties arise in translating this passage. *Purekkharoti* seems to mean "prefer" (as per 794 and 859), as it does sometimes in classical Sanskrit, but it also suggests the idea of "prejudging" or "predetermining." Also, *neyya* (as in 846) could mean "to be followed" or "imitated," that is, "to be copied, pin pointed or figured out" by means of his habits (*śīla*) and convictions (*vrata*).

17 Here *atta* (*apta*) is clearly "what is adopted or assumed (cognitively and affectively)," compare, 787 and 790ff. Hare translates "assumption" and Nyanaponika, not so gracefully, "das einst Geglaubte," implying that there is a new 'belief' to be adopted once the past (non-Buddhist) beliefs have been abandoned.

I am translating *ni-śri* and its derivatives (*nissaya, nissito*, etc.) with various forms of the verb "to rely." Hare uses "trust" or "have recourse," which is quite alright, but I prefer to preserve something of the literal meaning of "leaning on."

18 "Sa ve viyattesu na vaggasārī" (800c).

19 Henceforth *Aṭṭha* will stand for *Aṭṭhakavagga*.

20 The first line, "Yassūbhayante paṇidhīdha n' atthi," is rendered by Hare: "Who here directs his thoughts to neither course"; Nyanaponika, "Der kein Verlangen hat nach beiden Enden." Neumann, "Nach beiden Enden wer da nimmer hinspäht"; Chalmers, "When pray'rs for future life . . . cease." Basically, the problem seems to be *paṇidhi*, Neumann and Chalmers take this word in its late meanings, but it is more appropriately construed in its literal meaning of "placing down [-forth]," hence, "direct" or "fix" [the mind]. Hare and Nyanaponika are both acceptable, but Nyanaponika's rendering fits the context better. As usual, he follows *Mahā-Niddesa* closely, where the word is glossed (p. 109), "taṇhā . . . abhijjhā, lobho. . . ." But, in this passage the inclination (*paṇidhi*) being described is something more than mere longing; the word obviously refers to inclination in general, and the two extremes could be emotional, moral, or conceptual.

21 *Kappa* and *pakappayati*: "form [in the mind]," "fancy," the process by means of which the apperception (*saññā*) is formed, this gives rise to the multiplicity of fancies

or imaginings (*vikappa*), The dividing factor is the *papañca*, the fixation factor is the *saṅkhā*. The *kappa* is the active function of the "moulding" (Hare) of the *saṅkhāra*. See the pertinent notes of Nyanaponika in pp. 266 (on *Sn* 209), 281 (on *Sn* 373), 293 (on *Sn* 530), 257–258 (*Sn* 148), and 293 (on the key stanza 538). However, his comments on *saṅkhāra*, p.305, are not as apposite, since he fails to see the closeness of the *Sn* usage to another, related term: *abhisaṅkharoti*. His interpretation of *saññā* in the *Kalaha-vivāda* also seems to be a bit off the mark, for he still feels that the term is being used there in the context of the classical four *samāpatti* schema, which is obviously not the case. Nyanaponika, however, does take the term as we do in a latter part of his note on stanza 874, where he translates *papaññcasaṁjñāsaṅkhā* with "Vorstellung und Begriff der Vielheitswelt," (p. 332). But his translation of 874d is weak: "Denn vom Bewusstsein stammt die Vielheitswelt in ihren Teilen," this in spite of his commentary notes.

Muta has also been variously interpreted; I take it to belong with the root *man* (thus, with *muni*, etc.). Compare *saṃmuti* and stanzas 714, 798–799, 846, and, especially 839. Nyanaponika's "Erfahrendes' seems to me a good compromise between the commentatorial derivation from *mṛś-* and the derivation from *man-*; he takes it, though, correctly to be cognate to *mata*. (Also, compare, *Cūḷa Niddesa*, p. 298, and *Mahā-Niddesa*, pp. 87–89.)

It would seem pertinent at this point to mention two important passages from the Nikayas in which nonattachment to things seen, heard, etc. is formulated in the succint manner of the *Aṭṭha*, but in obvious reference to mindfulness. The *Bahiya-sutta* (*Udāna* I.10) is the most condensed of the two and makes no explicit reference to craving for sense objects. This aspect of the doctrine is brought out in the *Māluṅkya-sutta* (or *Mālukya*) of the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (hence-forth, *SN*), IV., pp. 72–74, where mindfulness is presented not only as the antidote to lust, but also as the final condition of the mind, beyond all dualities and moorings of the mind (*Sāraṭṭhapakāsinī*, however, interprets differently). Compare, also; *Theragāthā*, stanzas 794–817.

22 "Sandhiṭṭhirāgena hi te 'bhirattā."

23 I take *upadhi* literally (*upa-dhā*), but there is, of course a certain sense of "cover up," "sham." The poet is playing here with the idea of foraneous matter (*aññena*) piling up as "additives" or "agglutinants" to build up a semblance of a self. An *upadhi* is a "substratum" only in the sense that it is a base we build in order to have something to lean on, but it is not a real base, it is something added to the true nature of things, not something underlying them or giving any real support to illusion.

24 "Fashioning", *pakubbamāno*. Compare, *abhi(ni)saṁkharoti*.

25 Pp. 85–86. Followed by Nyanaponika in 789 and 790.

26 This passage could not be more reminiscent of the Māhdyamika. Compare, also, *Sn* 795d, 813d, and 860d.

27 "Rest," *nibbuti*.

28 "Nātumānam vikappayan tiṭṭhe." An equally acceptable rendering: "Though touched my multiple forms, he would not make a station [in them] fancying himself [to be this or that]." Evidently, *vikappayan* is to be taken in the sense of "separating and contrasting" oneself with respect to the multiple forms of the world. Thus, Nyanaponika, "Nicht möge man sein Selbst vergleichend unterscheiden." The word *rūpa*, however, encompasses much more than the "Tugenden" of Nyanaponika's rendering.

29 Nyanaponika takes *samuggahīta* as a noun meaning "dogmas," but it is clearly a participle of much broader meaning, and interchangeable with *uggahīta*, "that which is grabbed, grasped, or clutched." The change from the third person plural of 794 to the singular of 795 is in the original ιext.

30 See note 21, herein. Also see Bhikkhu Nanananda's excellent study on *papañca* and

papañca-sañña-saṅkhā: Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought (Kandy: Buddhist Publication. Society, 1971). Our interpretation of *saññā* (*saṁjñā*) is also confirmed by the scholastics; see, for example, *Abhidharmakośa*, II. stanza 47ab, and commentary to II. stanza 24 and I. stanza, 14cd; *Visuddhimagga* chapter XIV, par. 130.

31 "Mūlaṃ papañcasaṁkhāyā / mantā asmīti sabbam uparundhe / yā kāci taṇhā ajjhattaṃ / tūsaṃ vinayā sadā sato sikkhe //" Compare, *Sn* 1111: "ajjhattañ ca bahiddhā ca vedannam nābhinandato / evaṃ satassa carato viññāṇaṃ uparujjhati //"

The doctrine of no-self is not presented explicitly in the *Sn*. There are, however, two important passages that could be interpreted as statements of such a doctrine. In the classical passage at *Sn* 1119, the Buddha is attributed the words: "suññato lokaṃ avekkhasu ... sadā sato attānudiṭṭhimūhacca. ..." ("regard the world as empty ... always mindful, uproot views about [the / your] self"). Whether we construe these lines as an example of *anattavāda* in the classical sense or as an example of the *Aṭṭha*'s teaching advising the monk not to fancy himself as being this or that, being or not being (918, see note 28, herein), is truly not as important as the fact that this passage brings out the important connections: "emptiness-mindfulness-selflessness'. The other passage which seems to contain a pronouncement on the self question is *Sn* 756: "anattani attamānam passalokaṃ ... niviṭṭham nāmarūpasmim, 'idaṃ saccaṃ' ti maññati." ("See that the world has thoughts of self with regard to that which is not [the] self, mooring in name and form, the world thinks "this is the true".)

32 Compare note 31, herein, and *Sn* 1070–1072 (discussed below), also, 855, 1041, 1055–1056, 1105–1111. Less important, but of some interest are 933, 1026, 1035–1036, 1039, 1062, 1119 (see note 31, herein). Notice that most passages on mindfulness are from the *Pārāyana*.

33 In the practice of mindfulness, no doubt one must find the first irreconciliable difference between Christian and Buddhist mysticism. A few passages in St. John's *Subida* seem, for a moment, to be speaking of something close to mindfulness (and there is, to be sure, a certain minimal point of contact). Thus, *Subida*, II. 12. 3, II. 14. 11, and III. 2. 14, emphasize the importance of withdrawing from the fruit of the "imiginative faculties" and emptying the mind of everything except the "memory" of God. But the true nature and purpose of this withdrawal (*olvido*, in contrast to *smṛti*) comes through transparently in II. 8–9, II. 12. 4ff., II. 14. 10, and III. 11–14, *Llama* 3.19–21 and of course in the whole edifice of the *noche pasiva del espiritu* in *Noche oscura*. A careful perusal of these passages shows how superficial any attempt would be at reducing one type of mysticism to the terms of another, as attempted by so many (see, for example, George Grimm in his "Christian Mysticism in the Light of the Buddha's," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 4 (1928): 306–338).

34 On the basis of 872 we must surmise that in 873–874 *rūpam* stands for *nāmarūpa*. Equivalent, no doubt, to the *nāmakāya* of 1074. Compare, 530, 736, 756.

35 This is the only way I can interpret what is described in 874, discussed below. Compare, the *Potthapāda-sutta* (*DN* I. 178 ff.), where (p. 181) the idea of control, rather than suppression, is clearly suggested.

36 "Saññanidāna hi papañcasaṃkhā." Compare, 916, also 530, 886, and 1041. Compare *Itivuttaka*, pp. 53–54, but contrast *Udāna*, p. 77.

37 *DN* I. 276–277.

38 Compare also the causation "series" in the *Dvayatānupassanā-sutta*, *Sn*, pp. 139 ff.

39 The Pāli is here less active: "form ... ceases," "vibhoti rūpam."

40 On this refreshingly different use of the term *ākiñcañña*, confer, *Sn* 976, 1063, 1091, 1098–1100, 1115. Also, Compare, *akiñcana*, in 490, 501, 620, 645, and, of less value, 176, 455.

41 "Anānuyāyī": Hare, "untrammelled," Nyanaponika, following *Cūla-Niddesa*, "nicht

weiter-wandern." Perhaps better, "not having anything else to follow," that is, he is an *asaikṣa*.

42 Also, "perception." By Nyanamoli, for instance, in his *Path of Purification*. Confer, note 21, herein.

43 Confer, notes 30 and 36, herein.

44 Confer notes 34 and 39, herein. The context of the sutra itself does not allow a literal interpretation, that is, "making body and mind to cease completely." The cessation is to take place in this life. Confer the *ditthadhammābhinibbutā* of 1087. But, perhaps this is to be interpreted like the *diṭṭhe dhamme anītiham* of 1053, or in the light of the twofold typology of *nirvāna* (*sopādisesa* and *nirupādisesa*).

45 There is no place here for the reduction of this passage to the meditational stage of the eighth *arūpa-samāpatti* (*nevasaññānāsaññā*), Compare, Nyanaponika pp. 331–332). *Mahā-Niddesa* considers the person who has gone through the path described here as an *arūpa-magga-samangī* (pp. 279–280) and does not seem to appreciate the ascending and dialectic nature of the four steps. It also seems to ignore the fact that the *Kalahavivāda* is explicitly talking about the complete ending of becoming and sorrow. At any rate, the meaning of the four (or five) *samāpattis* is not at all clear, particularly if we insist on *nevasaññānāsaññasamāpatti* and the *nirodhasamāpatti* as mental states without perception" or "without feeling." It is difficult to see how the *saññāvedayitanirodha*, which is beyond the state of *nevasaññānāsaññā*, could be a simple return to "*na saññā*." The key to the term is no doubt in the word *vedayita*. But a clarification must await further research. The canonical literature is not always very helpful. Passages where the highest *samāpatti* is praised and recommended without a clear definition are abundant (see, for example, *AN* IV. 429–432, 433–434, and *MN* I. 159–160). In other places the canon seems to confirm interpretations like those of Buddhaghosa with words such as those of *MN* III. 45: "ayam, bhikkhave, bhikkhu na kiṁci maññati, na kuhiñci maññati, na kenaci maññati." But, then, contrast *MN* III. 28: "puna ca param, bhikkhave, sāriputto sabbaso nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṁ samatikkamma saññve-dayitanirodhaṁ upasampajja viharati / paññāya cassa disvā āsavā parikkhīnā honti / so tāya samāpattiyā sato vuṭṭhahati / so tāya samāpattiyā sato vuṭṭhahitvā ye dhammā atītā niruddhā viparinatā te dhamme samanupassati 'evaṁ kirame dhammā ahutvā sambhonti hutvā paṭiventi' ti / so tesu dhammesu anupāyo anapayo anissito appaṭibaddho vipamutto visaṁyutto vimāriyādikatena, cetasā viharati / so 'natthi uttari nissaranaṁ' ti pajānāti / tabbahulīkārā natthitvevassa hoti /".

Also, compare, the analysis of the *jhānas* and *samāpattis* in the *Cūlasuññamā-sutta* of the *MN* (III. pp. 104 ff.).

Release is not always attained by way of the *samapattis* (a fact well known to the defenders of the *satipaṭṭhāna* or *vipassanā* meditation system). Confer, for example, *Mahāsatipatthāna-sutta, DN* II., pp. 290ff., and *Samaññaphala-sutta, DN* I., pp. 75ff. Compare, also, the analysis of the *samāpattis* in *DN* I., pp. 178ff. (*Potthapāda-sutta*). In the traditional account of the Buddha's enlightenment it is said that Sakyamuni learnt the third and fourth *samāpattis* from his teachers Kalama and Ramaputra, realized that these did not lead to emancipation, and proceeded to develop his own method. The *nirodhasamāpatti* is not presented as the culmination of the new path. See references in Andre Bareau, *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha*, Première Partie (Paris: École Française d'Extrême Orient, 1963). See also, *Buddhacarita*, Canto XII.

The *Nettipakaraṇa* (pp. 76, 100) enumerates five *samāpattis* with terms reminiscent of the *Sn; saññā, asaññā, nevasaññānāsaññā, vibhūtasaññā, nirodhasaññā*. Dhammapāla, commenting on this unorthodox list, is obviously at a loss as to its meaning. Compare, Nyanaponika, pp. 331–332.

46 *SN* III., p. 9.

47 Notice the contrast between the person who is *sañña-ratta* and the one who is *paññāviniutta* and, therefore, *saññāviratta*.

48 "Sabbasaṁkhārasama thā saññāya uparodhanā," compare, the passages in note 27, herein.

49 It is interesting to note that a person's views are here taken to be in some way the basis and cause of the view others take of him. Could we say that a person's "own thing" and "gimmick" is that by which others and he himself identify his own being?

50 The *viññāna* of the *Sn* is closer to the *vijñapti* (active) of Yogācāra psychology, than to the fundamental awareness of *consciousness*. It is the active *grahaṇa* and *upalabdhi* of the mind (*Abhidharmakośa* I. vs. 16a.), the act of notation by means of which the *saññā* operates (*Abhidharmakosa* II. vs. 34ab.).

51 I am not at all satisfied with my rendering, "ceases," for *attaṃ paleti* (*gacchati*). This is a standard idiom for the setting of the sun, and, as pointed out by Nyanaponika in his note (p. 355), it has been purposefully chosen to avoid both the idea of annihilation and the idea of a permanent blissful abode, a duality about which Upasiva will question the Buddha in the next stanza (1075). Compare also, 876–877.

The simile of fire is also used to avoid both extremes: fire, one of the basic elements, does not cease to exist, it simply becomes imperceptible or ungraspable when it runs out of fuel. On this point, confer, E. Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, vol. 1 (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1953), pp. 225ff., and his important reference to *Mahābhārta* XII.187.2, 5–6 in note 131, p. 470. Also, to the question "so uda vā so n'atthi udāhu ve sassatiyā arogo" (1075), the answer is: "... na pamāṇam atthi," etc. (1076) translated below.

52 Compare, note 5, herein. Also the stock phrase for many of the passages on the inderterminables (*avyākṛtāni*), where the topic is the uprooting of the thirst and the grasping of the skandhas, by means of which one could pinpoint a person of the world, but not a Buddha who has uprooted them. Confer, for example, *SN* IV., pp. 373–380, 384, 401–403, (compare, *SN* IV., p. 52). On the *viannana* of the man who is released, compare the *Upaya-sutta* of *SN* III. 53–54.

53 "Remainderless": *anupādisesa*!!

54 The idea that the Buddha "sees through" those who, believing themselves experts in release, are still deeply rooted in attachment, reminds me of Kierkegaard's ironist, who sees through the inauthenticity of the pious. Compare, for example, the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. D. F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 537–544. Another interesting, but also partial parallel is found in St. John's remarks on those who cling to the mental images of meditation without letting go into the void of contemplation (*Subida del Monte Carmelo*, II. xii. 6).

55 The question is not the metaphysical validity of any theory, of any of the extremes, but rather the deceit and destructiveness of clinging. The problem is mooring in views; 785ab, "diṭṭhīnivesā na hi svātivattā / dhammesu niccheyya samuggahītaṃ." Both extremes are a bond (801), whether it is becoming or nonbecoming makes no difference (776, 856, 786, 877, 1068).

56 The differences between *Pārāyana* and *Aṭṭha* are mostly differences of emphasis. Both texts are very close, especially when compared with the rest of the *Sn*. But differences in approach, language, meter, and style suggest different origins for *Aṭṭha* and *Pārāyana*.

57 Notice that no view is to be considered the highest. As we will point out below, this "choicelessness" creates a problem for the formulation of directives in the path. This is the "non-dual bind" which has important philosophical and practical implications, especially in the *Mahāyāna*. I have considered some of these implications in an article

on the Buddhist "absolute" to appear shortly in the special volume on Buddhism of *Estudios de Asia y África del Norte* (México, D.F.).

58 A "highest" could also be a "beyond" (*param*). How far off the mark is the *Mahā-Niddesa* at times will be appreciated from its gloss of the word *visenikatvā*: "senā vuccati mārasenā / kāyaduccaritam marasenā, vacīduccaritaṃ mārasenā, manoduccaritaṃ mārasenā ... sabbākusalābhisaṃkhārā mārasenā / yato catūhi ariyamaggehi sabbā ca mārasenā sabbe ca patisenikarā kilesā jitā ca parājitā ... tena vuccati visenikatvā ti ..." (pp. 174–175).

59 This is one of the most doubtful passages in the *Aṭṭha*, it is also one of the few with evident metaphysical implications (possible parallel to Mādhyamika ontology, too). The Pali reads: "na h'eva saccāni bahūni nānā / aññatra saññāya niccāni loke." Chalmers: "Apart from consciousness; no diverse truths exist." Hare: "Indeed there are not many divers truths, Save from surmise on lasting in the world." Nyanaponika: "Nicht gibt es Wahrheit vielerlei, verschieden, Von ew'ger Geltung in der Welt, es sei denn bloss im Dünken." Neumann: "Verschieden vielfach kenn' ich keine Wahrheit, Bloss wahrgenommen die da ewig bleibe. ..." Only Hare comes close to an acceptable rendering. The word *saññāya* must be construed verbally with *niccāni* as its object. The Chinese (*Taishō* 198, p. 182–b–14) is unclear.

60 "Kuppapaṭiccasantiṃ". Compare, *Samādhirājā*, IX. 36 (Dutt, vol. I, p. 105), quoted in the First *Bhavanākrama*, p. 210. The same idea (that Buddha's meditation was superior to that of the non-Buddhist because his was free of all idea of a self, and, therefore of even the most subtle passion) is found in the *Buddhacarita*, canto XII.

61 Natvā ca so sammutiyo puthujjā / upekhati uggahaṇanta-m-aññe."

62 For *upaya* in the sense of attachment, confer, the *Upaya-sutta*, *SN* III. 53–54.

63 The same line (note 28) rendered differently above: "let him remain without distinguishing or fancying himself. ..."

64 "Cakkūhi n'eva lol' assa," a reference to the monk's deportment while begging for alms, as enjoined in the *Pātimokkha*.

65 "Sampajāno saṭhāni na kayirā."

66 "bhavāya vibhavāya". Hare: "becoming and decay." The compound *bhavābhava* does suggest, as aptly appreciated by Hare, "becoming this or that" (if interpreted as a compound of the *phalaphala* class). This interpretation is as appropriate as "becoming and not becoming," etc., in the context of the *Sn*. I have tried to preserve some of the nuances of *bhavābhava* in my translation of the couple *bhava-vibhava*.

67 "Vida retirada," in Fray Luis de León, *Poesia*, ed. J. M. Alda-Tesán (Madrid: Ebro, 1956), pp. 24–28. The praises of eremetical life often hide (as in this poem) a simple yearning for an escape from the multitudes and affairs of the city into the "peace of nature," as in Horace's "beatus ille qui procul negotiis."

68 Whether there are or not any "truth claims" in this teaching is a question that cannot be taken up here. But one could suggest the following models of statements which, like the teachings of the *Aṭṭha*, involve an injunction or recommendation, the value of which can only be "tested" fully by carrying out the injunction: "If you are to get your work done, you better stop talking." "If you don't look where you're going you'll fall." "You better stop thinking so much about it and get it done with," etc. The first and third propositions could, under certain circumstances, be self-abrogating in the sense that holding on to them or giving them thought and consideration could conceivably be one way of not carrying them out, as in the case of your friend teaching you to ride a bike saying: "Don't try to think about how you're supposed to do it, just ride on, otherwise you'll fall."

The classical simile for the self-abrogating nature of the Buddhist dharma is that of the two friction sticks which are destroyed by the same fire they produce; see, for example, *Kaśyapaparivarta*, section 69, quoted in the Third *Bhāvanākrama*, p. 20.

For fear of extending myself too much I also must abstain from discussing in more detail the purport of this "eventual rejection" or "culmination by transcendence" of the good dharma with regard to such central teachings as the *pratītyasamutpāda*. But I believe I would be interpreting faithfully the spirit of the parable of the balse, as it is reflected in the *Aṭṭha* or in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, if I were to gloss the abandonment of all dharmas by saying that emancipation requires the pruning of all moorings and safety-ropes of dogma and belief, the giving up of all plans and desires of accumulation and hoarding (whether of material goods or spiritual convictions) and a constant effort toward uncovering the roots of clinging behind even the most subtle distinctions between good, bad, or sublime dharmas. Compare, the *First Bhāvanākrama* (pp. 197–198) for a view that is *prima facie* slightly more conservative than that of the *Aṭṭhaka* or the *Vajracchedikā*. See also, *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX. 33 and *Pañjikā* thereon, and Conze's reference to the *Abhidharmakośa-Vyākhyā*, I, 22, in his note (p. 32) to the parable of the balse in the *Vajracchedikā*. A rather careful and sophisticated explanation of the meaning of total relinquishment and nonclinging is found in the *Samaṇamaṇḍika-sutta* (*MN* II. 22–29).

69 I have found *abhinivesa* only in *Sn* (785) *nivesa*, and *nivesana*, however, are more frequent, for example, 785, 801, 846.

70 References to Candrakīrti's work are given in parenthesis in this section of the article. Whenever there might be ambiguity, the number is preceded by the abbreviation *Pras*. All references are to Louis de la Vallée-Poussin's edition. References to the *kārikās* are made by chapter (roman numerals) and stanza (arabic).

71 Possible correspondences between the links in this chain and those of the twelve *nidānas* are not at all clear. Confer, Jacques May, *Prasannapadā Madhyamakavṛtti: douze chapitres* ... (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1959), note 586, p. 181. Candrakīrti, however, does develop his own chain at *Pras* 350–351: *upalambha, prapañca, (ayoniśo) vikalpa, ahaṃmameti-abhinivesa, kleśa, karina*, and *jarāmaraṇa*. Compare, *Bodhicaryāvatāra Pañjikā*, p. 350 and First *Bhāvanākrama*, pp. 215–216. Also, *Lalitavistara* (Leffmann), p. 419. And the lines from *Mahāvastu* III., p. 190 (also found in the *Jātakas* and quoted by Candrakīrti in *Pras* 451): "kāma jānāmi te mūlaṃ saṃkalpāt kila jāyase / natvaṃ saṃkalpayiṣyāmi tato me na bhaviṣyasin //"

See also the *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*, p. 240, lines 7–8 (Yamaguchi ed.): "rāgādīnān nimittam tadanukūlā indriyārthāh / ayoniśomanaskārah."

72 *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX. vs. 34–35.

73 Compare the parable of the blind men and the elephant in *Udāna* VI. 4 (pp. 66–69.

74 On the Mādhyamika idea of the interdependence of the two truths, see, for example, Candrakīrti's comments on *Madhyamaka* XXIV. 11 (*Pras* 495). Also the latter doctrine of *yuganaddha* in the *Bhāvanākramas*.

75 This is not to say that conduct is totally absent from Nāgārjuna's works. But in those which are unmistakeably his, the problem is taken up in a way that seems to suggest, prima facie, that this is not Nagarjuna's main preocuppation. I say "prima facie," because one can easily show that this "indifference" is only apparent. Confer, for example, *Madhyamaka* XXIV. 35–36, and *Prasannapadā* pp. 512–513, also, of course, chapters 8 and 17; and stanzas 52–57 of the *Vigrahavyāvartanī, Suhṛllekha*, of course, is primarily concerned with morals (or should I say "moralizing"?), but the connection between Nāgārjuna's dialectics and human conduct is not established there, as it clearly is in *Vigrahavyāvartanī*.

The distinction between *Aṭṭha* and Nāgārjuna is here, therefore, more of tone and intent than of doctrine.

76 The three main facts supporting an early date for the *Aṭṭhaka* and *Parāyana* (particularly the former) are: (1) references by title to the *Aṭṭha*, found in other parts of the *Nikāyas* and in the *Vinaya* (for example, *SN* III., p. 9, and *Vinaya* (*Mahāvagga* V) I.,

p. 195), (2) the inclusion in the *Khuddaka-Nikāya* of the two ancient commentaries to *Aṭṭha* and *Pārāyana* (*Mahā-Niddesa* and *Cūḷa-Niddesa*, respectively), and (3) the identification of some of the texts recommended by Asoka in his Second Rock Edict at Bhairāt with *Sn* texts. These and other arguments are considered in Yamada's remarks and bibliography, cited in note 10, herein. See also, Nyanaponika, pp. 17–22.

77 I trust my suggestion will not be misconstrued as a simplification of the problem. On the one hand, I do not want to give the impression that "Ch'an" is in any way monolithic or unitary. On the other, I do want to make it clear that not all of Ch'an is *subitist*, in fact, much of contemporary Zen in Japan includes many "gradualist" elements. The picture is highly complicated, and attempting to establish parallels could prove to be a very ungrateful task.

78 The expression *sammādiṭṭhi* is not found in the *Sn*, nor are *diṭṭhis* qualified in any way. The same is true of the *Madhyamaka*. Also, the positive core of Buddhist apophatism in the Mādhyamika, the *pratītyasamutpāda*, is not even hinted at in the *Aṭṭhaka* and *Pārāyana* (it is, however, mentioned once in the *Mahāvagga*, 653).

79 Confer, the texts on the "sudden path" quoted by Tucci in the Introduction (pp. 68ff.) to the First *Bhāvanākrama*.

80 A problem explicitly raised in the first folios of the Second *Bhāvanākrama*.

81 Op. cit. pp. 92–94, 114.

82 See, for example, the passages on the indeterminables in note 52, herein.

83 See A. K. Warder's comments on Nāgārjuna as not committed to either of the two *yānas, Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), pp. 374ff.

84 With regard to the path itself, only the *Ratnāvalī* (is it authentically Nāgārjuna's?) is more or less explicit.

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THE USES OF THE FOUR POSITIONS OF THE *CATUṢKOṬI* AND THE PROBLEM OF THE DESCRIPTION OF REALITY IN MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

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I. The four positions in early Buddhist thought

In the early philosophical literature of Buddhism the notion of four alternative positions (*koṭi*) making up what is often termed a *catuṣkoṭi* or 'tetralemma' appears in discussions on the questions whether a *tathāgata* exists after death, whether the world has an end and whether the world is eternal. In each of these cases the nature of a postulated entity and its relation to a predicate is investigated in such a way that all conceptually imaginable positions are exhausted; for an entity and its predicate can be conceptually related only in terms of these four limiting positions. Thus it is asked whether a *tathāgata* exists, does not exist, both exists and does not exist, or neither exists nor does not exist after death;[1] whether the world (of living beings *loka*) is finite, infinite, both finite and infinite, or neither finite nor infinite; and whether the world (of living beings) is eternal, not eternal, both eternal and not eternal, or neither eternal nor not eternal.[2] In addition to these questions, the canonical literature mentions that of the relationship between a vital principle (*jīva* 'soul') and the body which is envisaged under only two headings, viz. whether they are different or not different.

Thus in the Buddhist canonical texts up to fourteen points have been mentioned, twelve concerning three topics each investigated with respect to four positions and two relating to a single topic investigated in terms of only two positions. In the canon the Buddha is represented as having declined to answer any of these moot points when questioned about them by Māluṅkyāputta, Vacchagotta (Vatsagotra) and other questioners; and he has thus come to be suspected of either ignorance or agnosticism. However, these questions are treated

in Buddhist thought rather as ones to be set aside (*sthāpanīya, ṭhapanīya*) because they cannot be explicated either usefully or meaningfully, and for this reason they are frequently referred to as the unexplicated points (*avyākṛtavastu*).

Such questions cannot be *usefully* answered and are to be set aside since from the soteriological point of view their solution can contribute nothing to progress on the path to Awakening.[3] And they cannot be *meaningfully* decided because of a certain logical and semantic vagueness in their terms. These questions are to be met in one form or another throughout Buddhist literature beginning with the canonical texts, and they have accordingly been extensively discussed also in the modern literature on Buddhism and Indian philosophy.[4]

In the following pages certain uses and interpretations of the last two positions (*koṭi*) of the 'tetralemma', and of 'neither . . . nor' sentences in particular, will be examined with respect to their applications in the philosophical analysis of linguistic and conceptual fictions, the conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) factors of existence on the relative level of dependent origination, and the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) factors on the level of ultimate reality (*paramārtha*). And the question whether the Mahāyāna Śāstras developed a special language and logic of mysticism[5] apart and quite distinct from the language and logic of philosophical analysis as well as ordinary usage will be touched on in connexion with certain uses of the 'neither . . . nor' formula. This study will be based on some older treatises of the Madhyamaka and Vijñānavāda schools and on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, an old Mahāyānist text that deals especially with the positive characterization of ultimate reality.

II. The uses of the *catuṣkoṭi* in the Madhyamaka

In the literature of the Madhyamaka school the term *catuṣkoṭi(kā)* has not actually been employed by Nāgārjuna in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, Āryadeva in the *Catuḥśataka* and Candrakīrti in the *Prasannapadā*.[6] But the four positions of the 'tetralemma' frequently appear from the earliest times in the literature of this school, where they are usually negated either explicitly or implicitly.[7] That is, each position (or *koṭi*) – the positive one (I), the negative one (II), the one consisting in a combination or conjunction of the positive and negative (III), and the one consisting in the bi-negation of the positive and negative (IV) – is negated, the usual term used for such negation being *pratiṣedha*.

The negation may be expressed either in a single grammatical word – namely a descriptive (*karmadhāraya*) or possessive (*bahuvrīhi*) compound made up of a term preceded by the negative member *a(n)* – or in a sentence predicate containing a verbally bound negative particle – i.e. *na* + verb[8] in Sanskrit. The negation is therefore formally either term-negation or predicate-negation. While the first syntactic form corresponds to relational negation (*paryudāsa*) as defined by the Indian grammarians, the second syntactic form answers to the definition of absolute negation (*prasajyapratiṣedha*) as given by them.[9]

The positions of a 'tetralemma' have been variously used in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* for analysing the concept of causation, the totality of factors on

the level of the relative and conventional (*saṃvṛti*), conditionship in the context of reality (*tattva*) or the ultimate (*paramārtha*), the existence of a *tathāgata*, and *nirvāṇa*. With the sole exception of the case of the totality of factors on the level of the relative (§ 2 below), the analyses in question are carried out by negating all the positions or *koṭis*.

1. Causation

The four positions appear in the analysis of causation in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 1.1:

> *na svato nâpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nâpy ahetutaḥ /*
> *utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana ke cana //*
> Entities of any kind are not ever found anywhere produced from themselves, from another, from both [themselves and another], and also from no cause.

The leading commentators of the two main branches of the Madhyamaka school – Bhāvaviveka for the Svātantrika branch and Candrakīrti for the Prāsaṅgika branch – agree that the statements in question here are to be interpreted as negations that do not commit the person accepting them to an affirmation of their contradictory. In other words they are regarded as cases of absolute negation (*prasajyapratiṣedha*) as defined by the logicians, so that the negation of a sentence stating production from self, for example, does not commit one to the affirmation of a sentence stating production from another, etc.[10]

In the same body of texts we also meet with statements where the negative is not verbally bound but forms part of a compound, so that such a sentence would correspond formally to the Indian grammarians' definition of relational negation (*paryudāsa*). This is the case for example in the eight negations which relate to dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) in the introductory verses to the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*. The question then arises whether this syntactical difference reflects a semantic one and in particular whether, from the logical point of view, we have to do in this second type of sentence with a proposition committing the person accepting it to the affirmation of the contradictory of what he has negated, as is to be expected normally in the case of *paryudāsa* negation. In other words, do the eight (negated) epithets referring to the *pratītyasamutpāda* in the introductory verse of the *Madhyamakaśāstra*

> *anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam /*
> *anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam //*

commit the Mādhyamika to a positive statement equivalent to the contradictory of what is here negated because these epithets appear in the syntactical form usually associated with *paryudāsa* negation?

For the Mādhyamika the reply is evidently 'no'. Candrakīrti indeed observes that, by using the epithets *anutpāda* etc., the Buddha, who has indicated that entities arise in dependence on causes and conditions, has denied (*ni-ṣidh-*) that an entity arises from no cause, one cause or disparate causes, or that it is produced from itself, another, or both together. The surface nature (*sāṃvṛta-svarūpa*) of conventional things is thus revealed (*udbhāvita*) by this negation (*niṣedha*) in a way that is applicable to the conventional *pratītyasamutpāda* – although in point of fact, for the pure gnosis of the saints (*āryajñāna*), there is no cessation (*nirodha*) because no entity has ever been produced through own being (*svabhāva* 'aseitas').[11]

Moreover, the explanations offered by the exegetical tradition of the Madhyamaka do not appear to suggest the existence of any correlation of the syntactically variant forms of negation mentioned above – viz. nominally bound term-negation and verbally bound predicate-negation – with the logical differentiation between implicitly affirming (presuppositional or choice) negation and denying (non-presuppositional or exclusion) negation, or between the negation of a proposition and the negation of a predicate. In other words, in the usage of the Mādhyamika authors, it does not seem to be the case that negation which is of the *paryudāsa* type on the syntactic level – i.e. nominally bound negation – has the logical value of relational negation, in contradistinction to absolute negation as expressed by the verbally bound *prasajya* type of negation; and both syntactic schemata appear to have been interpreted by these exegetes as involving, from the logical point of view, what they term absolute (*prasajya*) negation.[12] The linguistic formulae expressing the opposed positions (and *koṭis*) in question are furthermore sometimes regarded as involving conflict and contradiction (*virodha*).[13]

Although it has been alleged that Buddhist philosophers – and, indeed, other Indian thinkers as well – ignore or reject the principles of non-contradiction and excluded middle, this contention certainly cannot be sustained as concerns Nāgārjuna and his school, whose entire reasoning is in fact founded on them. It is true that paradoxical and antiphrastic formulations are not infrequent in some Mahāyāna Sūtras, and in particular in the Prajñāpāramitā texts of which the Madhyamaka school has made abundant use; and Nāgārjuna was evidently convinced of the paradoxicality of many so-called common-sense views of the world and the real based on the assumption of entities or essences possessing own being (*svabhāva*) as maintained by many of his predecessors and contemporaries.[14] But at least in his theoretical scholastic treatises (*rigs ćhogs*), of which the *MMK* is most representative, he does not seem to have himself employed paradoxes as such in an attempt to speak of reality.[15]

2. *The totality of factors in relative truth*

In the *MMK* the following has been said with regard to transactional and relative truth (18.8):

sarvaṃ tathyaṃ (na vā tathyaṃ) tathyaṃ câtathyam eva ca /
naivâtathyaṃ naiva tathyam etad buddhānuśāsanam //
All[16] is just so,[17] or[18] not just so, both just so and not just so, neither just so nor not just so: this is the graded teaching of the Buddhas.

This statement might at first sight seem to be a paradox, or perhaps even an example of the outright rejection of the rule of non-contradiction. However, to understand the purport of the statement it is in the first place necessary to note that the use of the word *anuśāsana* – with the preverb *anu-* meaning 'progressive' or 'fitted' – for the teachings in question may be crucial. Candrakīrti at least clearly thought so, for he explains *anuśāsana* with due regard to its etymology either as a teaching that proceeds progressively (*anupūrvyā śāsanam*) in introducing its recipients to reality (*tattvāmṛtāvatāradeśanānupūrvī*), or as a teaching fitted to those who are to be instructed (*vineyajanānurūpyeṇa vā śāsanam*).[19] In his discourses the Buddha is in fact represented as not seeking to dispute with people however much they may quarrel with him, and as disposed to adhere to usually accepted conventions from which he would depart only when replying to well-defined and semantically well-formed questions put to him by informed questioners.[20] Candrakīrti emphasizes the progressive and also complementary nature of these teachings by stating that the particle *vā* used in the verse is equivalent to *ca* in the sense that the teachings in question are cumulative (*deśanāsamuccaya*).[21]

It is furthermore important to observe that the context clearly shows that such a method of teaching that takes 'all' to be just so, etc., according to the situation, does not represent an attempt to define ultimate and ineffable reality. On the contrary, it is accommodated to conventional ways of speaking used by the majority of people with respect to ordinary topics of discourse, ways which the Buddha himself adopted in order to guide people away from doctrinal bypaths and ethical abysses and set them on the main road toward their particular, albeit interim, destinations. Candrakīrti accordingly observes that, when teaching in this manner that 'all' is just so, etc., the Buddha has ordinary unintelligent folk in mind in the first statement, and the Āryas in the statement to the effect that all is false (*mṛṣā: atathya*).| As for the teaching that 'all' is neither *tathya* nor *atathya*, it is intended for persons who have for a long time cultivated insight into reality but have not yet totally eradicated the obstacles (*āvaraṇa*);[22] such a use of the 'neither ... nor' type of statement is held to be appropriate because it is applied when speaking of a subject that is empty (null) like the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāsuta*), so long as the particular disciples addressed have only partially understood the non-substantiality of all *dharmas*.[23] (We would say that a sentence containing such an empty subject is not well-formed semantically, and that any qualification is therefore inapplicable.) Such a method of progressive and accommodated teaching is, then, considered to be simply a useful device (*upāya*) employed by the compassionate Buddha to introduce people in a preliminary manner to the quintessence of reality (*tattvāmṛtāvatāra*).[24]

Āryadeva has us observe in the chapter of his *Catuḥśataka* dealing with the practice of the disciple that any references in the Buddha's teaching to existence, non-existence, both existence and non-existence, and neither existence nor non-existence are to be regarded as 'remedies' employed according to the nature of the 'disease' to be treated in each specific case (8.20):

> *sad asat sadasac cêti nóbhayaṃ cêti kathyate /*
> *nanu vyādhivaśāt sarvam auṣadhaṃ nāma jāyate //*
> Reference is made to existence, non-existence, [both] existence and non-existence, and neither. Is it not that everything, according to the disease, comes to be what is called a medicine?[25]

The progressive nature of the teachings has also been emphasized by Āryadeva (*CŚ* 8.15):

> *vāraṇaṃ prāg apuṇyasya madhye vāraṇam ātmanaḥ /*
> *sarvasya vāraṇaṃ paścād yo jānīte sa buddhimān //*
> First demerit is excluded, in the middle self is excluded, and finally all is excluded; he who knows [this] is a wise person.[26]

3. *Ātman*

Analysis by means of the positions including bi-negation in the 'neither . . . nor' form is moreover applied to the variant teachings concerning a self (*ātman*) alluded to in the Buddhist canon. The *MMK* states (18.6):

> *ātméty api prajñapitam anātmêty api deśitam /*
> *buddhair nâtmā na cânātmā kaścid ity api deśitam //*
> On the one hand the designation 'self' has been made and on the other 'non-self' has been taught, and the Awakened ones have taught also '[there is] no self and no non-self'.[27]

In his comment Candrakīrti has pointed out that the two opposed doctrines of *ātman* and *anātman* are to be found not only outside the Buddhist teaching (for example in the Sāṃkhya and Lokāyata respectively),[28] but even within the Buddhist canon. In some places the Buddha in fact refers positively to an *ātman* as a protection,[29] and also to acts belonging to an *ātman*;[30] whereas elsewhere he explicitly states that there is here no *ātman* having any conceivable connexion with the psycho-somatic groups (*skandha*) through a relation of identity, possession or inclusion.[31] Since a conflict (*virodha*) can arise only when both opposed teachings are ascribed to the same source (here the Buddha),[32] it is of course only with this case that one is concerned here. However, this is not in itself a sufficient condition for a conflict because, in addition, the teachings in question would have to relate to exactly the same thing in the same respect. But this is not

considered to be so, and the intentions of the teachings (*deśanābhiprāya*) in question have therefore to be elicited to begin with.[33] According to Candrakīrti these are as follows. In accordance with the first, positive, position, the Buddhas have sometimes employed the designation '*ātman*' in order to turn disciples of a lower type (*hīna-vineya*) away from unwholesome actions. But they have also spoken, in accordance with the second position, of '*anātman*' in their desire to assist disciples of the middling type (*madhya-vineya*) whose conceptual attachment (*abhiniveśa*) to the speculative view positing a real substantial self (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*) must be weakened so that they may achieve *nirvāṇa*.[34] Nevertheless, the Buddhas have in fact also taught that there is neither self nor non-self to superior disciples (*utkṛṣṭa-vineya*) after having established their superior convinced adhesion (*adhimukti*) with respect to *nirvāṇa*; for such disciples are not attached to a self, and they are able to penetrate the very kernel of the most profound teachings as a consequence of having through previous superior exercises ripened the seeds of convinced adhesion to the profound *dharma*.[35] This explanation is then connected by Candrakīrti with the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (§ 57), where it is stated that the affirmation of *ātman* and *nairātmya* both represent extremes, the Middle Way being formless, invisible, incommensurable, etc.; and with Nāgārjuna's *Ratnāvalī* (2.3–4), which says that the Buddha has qualified the visual and auditory as neither true nor false because a conceptual position (*pakṣa*) necessarily involves its counter-position (*pratipakṣa*) and both are thus untrue. And just as the view of the existence of an *ātman* does not correspond to reality, so also its opposite, the view of the existence of non-self, would not do so. Hence the teaching that there exists neither self nor non-self is appropriate because it alone allows one to avoid positing a speculative entity – be it a positive *ātman* or a negative *anātman* – as the propositional subject of the substantive verb *asti* 'exists'.[36] Candrakīrti's explanation emphasizes the point that the bi-negation contained in the last position does not apply two opposed predicates simultaneously to some entity or essence regarded as indeterminate.

We have to do here with three distinct approaches fitting the predispositions and needs of three different types of disciples. Whereas the first two types are provided with remedies (*pratipakṣa*) against the 'ills' of nihilism and eternalism, the highest type receives the teaching to the effect that in fact neither of the opposed views is valid because both are devoid of reality (*atattva*, p. 358.8). Either term of the conceptual dichotomy (*vikalpa*) *ātman*/*anātman* is an extreme deriving from discursive development (*prapañca*) and related to either eternalism or nihilism, the twin extreme positions that the Middle Way eschews by its very definition.[37] To say that these two doctrinal extremes are nothing but polarizations of discursive and dichotomizing conceptualization no doubt amounts to saying that they relate in the final analysis to empty (null) subjects.[38]

With regard to analysis by means of the four positions, a verse by Āryadeva may be quoted in which it is said that, in considering oneness (i.e. identity), otherness (i.e. difference), both oneness and otherness, and neither oneness nor

otherness, it is necessary in addition to consider the fourfold question as to whether we have, in each case, existence, non-existence, both existence and non-existence, and neither existence nor non-existence (*CŚ* 14.21):

sad asat sadasac cêti sadasan nêti ca kramaḥ /
eṣa prayojyo vidvadbhir ekatvādiṣu nityaśaḥ //

In his comment on this verse Candrakīrti first gives as examples of oneness, otherness, their conjunction, and their bi-negation respectively the *satkāryavāda*, the *asat kāryavāda*, the *sadasatkāryavāda*, and the doctrine of the indeterminate (*brjod du med pa*) nature of the relation of oneness/otherness between products and their causes. And he next gives as examples of the four-term set *ātman* (: *sat*), *anātman* (: *asat*), both *ātman* and the absence of *ātman* (i.e. *anātman*: *sat* and *asat*), and *nâtmâpi na cânātmâpi* (: *na san nâsat*).[39]

This type of analysis of a problem thus constitutes one of the basic methods used by the Mādhyamikas to establish the inapplicability of any imaginable conceptual position – positive, negative or some combination of these – that might be taken as the subject of an existential proposition and become one of a set of binary doctrinal extremes (*antadvaya*).[40]

4. Dependent origination and reality

An important use of the 'neither ... nor' form of statement is to be found in *MMK* 18.10:

pratītya yad yad bhavati na hi tāvad tad eva tat /
na cânyad api tat tasmān nôcchinnaṃ nâpi śāśvatam //
Whatever exists in dependence [on a cause] is not that [cause] nor is it different [from that cause]. Therefore [the cause on which there is dependence] is neither destroyed nor eternal.

This point indeed constitutes the very kernel of the teaching of the Buddhas (18.11)

The problem here is what Candrakīrti has termed the conventional 'worldly' characteristic of reality (*laukikaṃ tattvalakṣaṇam*), i.e. the relation between cause and effect once the Mādhyamika has been able to establish that neither the non-causal and eternalistic *śāśvatavāda* nor the causal and non-eternalistic *satkāryavāda* withstands philosophical analysis. This verse then refers to what might be called the antinomic and even irrational nature of any concept of production so long as the factors in question are supposed to be existent entities (*bhāva*).[41]

But when seen in the light of the true nature of reality (*tattvalakṣaṇa*) as it is accessible to the Āryas, the real itself is not antinomic and becomes intelligible (18.9):

aparapratyayaṃ śāntaṃ prapañcair aprapañcitam /
nirvikalpam anānārtham etat tattvasya lakṣaṇam //
Independent of another,[42] still, not discursively developed through discursive developments, without dichotomizing conceptualization, and free from multiplicity:[43] this is the characteristic of reality.

With this should be compared what is said about conditionship, the real nature of dependent origination (*MMK* 7.16):

pratītya yad yad bhavati tat tac chāntaṃ svabhāvataḥ /
tasmād utpadyamānaṃ ca śāntam utpattir eva ca //
Whatever exists in dependence [on a cause] is still in its own nature; therefore what is produced is still, as is the very process of production.

Here then a 'neither ... nor' form of statement is used to reveal the irrationality of something, that is, the antinomic and logically inconsistent character of a theory of causality operating with the concept of *bhāvas* endowed with real natures (*svabhāva*). (That this is not the Mādhyamika's own theory of causation does not require reiteration.[44])

In sum, to say that something is neither *A* nor non-*A* ($\bar{A}$) does not represent an attempt on the part of the Mādhyamika to define some entity (*bhāva*, i.e. a thing possessing *svabhāva*) that is neither *A* nor $\bar{A}$ (i.e. indeterminate), but rather a way of stating the Buddhist theory of conditionship in terms of the Madhyamaka doctrine of emptiness of own being (*svabhāvaśūnyatā*) and non-substantiality of all factors (*dharmanairātmya*). And both eternalism (non-destruction) and nihilism (non-production) are thus excluded as at the same time extreme and complementary positions based solely on dichotomizing conceptualization.

To the extent that it applies to the conventional worldly domain of the surface level the Mādhyamika's Middle Way does not, when seen in this light, involve either the ignoring or the rejection of the principle of non-contradiction. And the fact, or truth, of the interdependent origination of things is then referred to by the term *śūnyatā* 'emptiness', a designation not belonging to the object-language applied conditionally to this state of affairs.[45] Such is accordingly the Middle Way (*MMK* 24.18):

yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe /
sā prajāptir upādāya pratipat sâiva madhyamā //[46]

In addition to their uses reviewed above both for analysing fictional constructs, such as dichotomous conceptions based on the idea of *ātman* (in e.g. *MMK* 18.6), and also for discussing the conventional surface-level origination of *dharmas* in dependence on causes and conditions on the plane of the *laukika-tattvalakṣaṇa* (in e.g. *MMK* 18.10), the *koṭis* – and especially the bi-negation of opposed but complementary positive and negative terms in the 'neither ... nor'

form of statement – appear also in the Mādhyamika's discussion of terms used to indicate ultimate reality. This is the domain of what Candrakīrti terms *tattvalakṣaṇa* proper, as accessible to the gnosis (*jñāna*) of the perfected saints (*ārya*).[47]

An essential characteristic of reality is, Nāgārjuna has stated, to be uncommunicated by one to another,[48] to be still, to be not the object of discursive development, to be free from dichotomizing conceptualization, and to be without differentiation (*MMK* 18.9 quoted above, p. 10). Candrakīrti observes that whereas *vikalpa* comprises a 'running forth' of thinking (*cittapracāra*), it can be said that reality (*tattva*) is not only verbally inexpressible but that it resides in absence of the 'running forth' even of pure knowledge (*jñānasyâpy apracāraḥ*).[49] The *paramārtha* is neither taught nor is it even cognized (*sa nôpadiśyate, na cápi jñāyate*).[50] And the fact that the *tattva* is free from multiplicity is to be recognized because of the fact that it has the value of emptiness (*anānārthatā tattvasya lakṣaṇaṃ veditavyaṃ śūnyatayâi-karasatvāt*). In sum, the *paramārtha* finds its only appropriate 'expression' in the silence of the saint (*ārya-tūṣṇīmbhāva*),[51] propositions being applicable only to entities within the sphere of discursive development (*prapañca*) and dichotomizing conceptualization (*vikalpa*). Such then is *tattvalakṣaṇa* for the perfected Āryas, with respect to whose gnosis there can be no cessation of things because things are in fact not produced in respect of own being (*svabhāva*).[52]

The negation of the opposed predicates 'originated' and 'destroyed' for a grammatical 'subject' that refers to the level of absolute reality – *dharmatā*, *nirvāṇa*, etc. – is then a way of saying that outside the domain of discursive and conceptual thinking there is no propositional naming (*MMK* 18.7):

> *nivr̥ttam abhidhātavyaṃ nivr̥tte cittagocare /*
> *anutpannāniruddhā hi nirvāṇam iva dharmatā //*
> The denotatum has ceased once what is in the domain of thinking has ceased; for *dharma*-nature is non-produced and non-destroyed, like *nirvāṇa*.[53]

Candrakīrti comments:

> If there existed here any denotatum whatsoever, it would be set forth; but once the denotatum is stopped and there is no object of words, then no thing at all is taught by the Buddhas. . . . Were any thing within the domain of thinking, there would be verbal activity consequent on the imputation to it of some phenomenal mark (*nimitta*). But when the very object of thinking is not possible, where then is a phenomenal mark imputed in virtue of which there might be verbal activity? . . . And because, like *nirvāṇa*, *dharmatā* – the own being (*svabhāva*) of the *dharmas*, the nature (*prakr̥ti*) of the *dharmas* – is established as non-

produced and non-destroyed, thinking consequently does not operate there. And when there is no thinking activity how can there be imputation of phenomenal marks? Hence it is fully established that no thing at all has been taught by the Buddhas.

It is for this reason then that only the silence of the saint is in conformity with absolute reality.

Nāgārjuna makes the point again in his chapter on *nirvāṇa* (*MMK* 25.24):

sarvopalambhopaśamaḥ prapañcopaśamaḥ śivaḥ /
ná kva cit kasya cit kaś cid dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ //
The quieting of all cognitive grasping, the quieting of all discursive development, still: no *dharma* has been taught anywhere by the *buddha* to anybody.

5. *The* tathāgata *and* nirvāṇa

An idea related to the preceding is expressed by Nāgārjuna in his chapter on the *tathāgata* (*MMK* 22.15):

prapañcayanti ye buddhaṃ prapañcātītam avyayam /
te prapañcahatāḥ sarve na paśyanti tathāgatam //
Those who make the *buddha* – beyond discursive development and unchanging – the object of discursive development are all ruined by discursive development, and they do not see the *tathāgata*.

Candrakīrti notes that all discursive development is dependent on a substantial thing (*vastu*); but the *tathāgata* is no substantial thing (*avastuka*). In the next verse Nāgārjuna adds that the world (of living beings) has the same nature as the *tathāgata* and that it is consequently without own being, just like the *tathāgata* (22.16):

tathāgato yatsvabhāvas tatsvabhāvam idaṃ jagat /
tathāgato niḥsvabhāvo niḥsvabhāvam idaṃ jagat //

These two verses follow a section where Nāgārjuna discusses the application of the negation of the four positions of the *catuṣkoṭi* to the question of the existence after cessation of a *tathāgata* and to the question whether the world (*loka*) has an end (*anta*) and is eternal (*śāśvata*). These are of course the questions dealt with in twelve of the fourteen unexplicated points (*avyākṛtavastu*).[54]

In this connexion Nāgārjuna has explained that the application of the four positions based on the idea of the empty (*śūnya*) is not valid from the point of view of absolute reality (*MMK* 22.11):

> *(śūnyam iti na vaktavyam) aśūnyam iti vā bhavet /*
> *ubhayaṃ nôbhayaṃ cêti prajñaptyarthaṃ tu kathyate //*
> One must not say 'empty', or else there would be 'not empty', both ['empty' and 'not empty'] and neither. Yet for the sake of designation [such] is stated.[55]

The scholiast[56] has observed:

> All this [viz. the four positions] is not to be said. However, if unspoken, knowers are unable to understand own being as it is (*yathāvadavasthitam*). So, relying on transactional truth (*vyavahārasatya*), by imputation (*āropataḥ*) we say 'empty' with a view to transactional usage by accommodation to people who are to be trained. And we also say 'not empty', 'empty and not empty', and 'neither empty nor not empty'.[57] Hence [Nāgārjuna] has said: "Yet for the sake of designation [such] is stated." As the Lord [Buddha] declared, "All factors of existence are without own being . . .". Elsewhere the not empty is spoken of, [as when it was said:] "Oh monks, were a past visible form (*rūpa*) non-existent, a learned Auditor-Saint would not have desired [that] past visible form. Oh monks, because there is a past visible form, a learned Auditor-Saint therefore desires that past visible form." "Were a future visible form non-existent . . .". "Oh monks, were past consciousness non-existent . . .".[58] Thus, in the Sautrāntika doctrine, the past and future are empty, the remainder [viz. the present] being not empty; dissociated conditionings[59] and communicative behaviour (*vijñapti*) are empty.[60] In the Vijñānavāda also the imaginary nature has the property of being empty because it is not produced in dependence, as in the case of a person suffering from eye-disease who sees a double moon.

Here the scholiast quotes *Madhyāntavibhāga* 1.3[61] and then concludes by saying: "All these constructions (*kalpanā*, viz. the four positions) are impossible (*na sambhavanti*) in the case of the *tathāgata* free from discursive development (*prapañca*)."

Just as the four positions based on the property of being empty and its opposite are said to be impossible in the case of the *tathāgata*, so also the four positions based on the concept of the eternal (*śāśvata*) and its opposite, and on that of an end (*anta*) and its opposite, are inapplicable to what is still (*MMK* 22.12):

> *śāśvatāśāśvatādy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayam /*
> *antānantādi câpy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayam //*

In his comment Candrakīrti first enumerates the fourteen *avyākṛtavastus* in which the eternality of the world, the end of the world and the existence of the *tathāgata* after death[62] are each considered in terms of the four limiting posi-

tions, while the relation between a life principle (*jīva*) and the body is considered in terms of only two limiting positions (identity and difference). Candrakīrti then explains that just as the tetrad of *śūnyatva* etc. is not possible (*na sambhavati*) in the case of the *tathāgata* tranquil by nature and without own being (*niḥsvabhāva*), so the tetrad of the eternal is not possible in this case. Indeed, it is just because of this impossibility (*asambhava*) that this set of four questions was not explicated by the Buddha in the case of the world of living beings (*loka*), the case being just like attributing darkness or paleness to the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāputra*).[63] And just as this tetrad is impossible in the case of the *tathāgata*, so is that based on the idea of an end and its opposite impossible for the tranquil *tathāgata*.

In sum, suppositions (*cintā*) or constructions (*kalpanā*) based on the four positions of the *catuṣkoṭi* do not fit what is empty of own being (*MMK* 22.14ab):

> *svabhāvataś ca śūnye 'smiṃś cintā naivopapadyate /*

Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti consider that the four *koṭis* relating to the *tathāgata*'s existence after cessation (*nirodha*) were developed with reference to speculation on *nirvāṇa*, and that the other two questions also analysed in terms of four *koṭis* – the world's end and eternality – were developed respectively with reference to whether the world and the self come to a final end (*aparānta*) and whether they have a beginning (*pūrvānta*) (*MMK* 25.21):

> *paraṃ nirodhād antādyāḥ śāśvatādyāś ca dṛṣṭayaḥ /*
> *nirvāṇam aparāntaṃ ca pūrvāntaṃ ca samāśritāḥ //*[64]

The negation of the four positions based on the concept of entity (essence or *aseitas*) and absence of entity is furthermore applied to the term which has been used above all others in Buddhist thought to refer to reality: *nirvāṇa*.

After having demonstrated the inapplicability of the first three positions – entity (or essence, *bhāva* = *dṅos po*), absence of entity (or essence, *abhāva* = *dṅos med*), and both entity and absence of entity – in verses 4 to 14 of his chapter on *nirvāṇa* in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, Nāgārjuna takes up the question of the last position consisting in bi-negation of entity and absence of entity in the following pair of verses (*MMK* 25.15–6):

> *naivâbhāvo naiva bhāvo nirvāṇam iti yâñjanā /*
> *abhāve caiva bhāve ca sā siddhe sati sidhyati //*
> *naivâbhāvo naiva bhāvo nirvāṇaṃ yadi vidyate /*
> *naivâbhāvo naiva bhāva iti kena tad ajyate //*
> The showing that *nirvāṇa* is neither entity nor absence of entity is established on condition that absence of entity and also entity be established. [But] if *nirvāṇa* exists neither as absence of entity nor as entity, what shows it to be neither absence of entity nor entity?[65]

Candrakīrti has provided the following comment.

> Were there some thing such as an entity, then, as its negation (*pratiṣedha*), there is the construction that *nirvāṇa* is not entity (*naiva bhāva nirvāṇam ity eṣā kalpanā*). And were there absence of entity, then, as the negation of this, *nirvāṇa* might be not absence of entity (*naivâbhāvo nirvāṇaṃ syāt*). But when entity and absence of entity do not exist, their negation also does not exist. Therefore even the construction that *nirvāṇa* is neither entity nor absence of entity is altogether not applicable, so that is not logically correct.[66] Moreover, if it be supposed that this *nirvāṇa* exists having the nature of neither absence of entity nor entity, what shows, makes cognitively perceived and reveals that this *nirvāṇa* of such a kind having neither [absence of entity and entity] as its nature (*nobhayarūpa*) exists? Is there in this case some knower (*pratipattṛ*) of such a kind in *nirvāṇa*, or is there not? (a) If there were, a self would exist in *nirvāṇa* even; but [this] is not admitted because of the absence of existence (*astitvābhāva*) of a self without an appropriated substratum (*nirupādāna*) [in *nirvāṇa*]. (b) If there were not, who determines that there exists this *nirvāṇa* of such a kind? – Perhaps [somebody] situated in *saṃsāra* does so? – If [somebody] situated in *saṃsāra* determines this, does he do so through gnosis (*jñāna*) or by analytical knowledge (*vijñāna*)? If you, suppose that it is by *vijñāna*, that is not logically correct because *vijñāna* has as its object a phenomenal mark (*nimitta*) and there is no phenomenal mark in *nirvāṇa*; therefore, to begin with, this is not objectivized by *vijñāna*. Nor is it known through *jñāna*; this is so because *jñāna* will necessarily have emptiness as its object (*śūnyatālambana*); and since this [*jñāna* will then have] the nature of non-production (*anutpādarūpa*) exclusively how does such [*jñāna*] whose own nature is non-existent (*avidyamānasvarūpa*) cognitively grasp that *nirvāṇa* is neither absence of entity nor entity, *jñāna* having [precisely] the nature of being beyond all discursive development (*prapañca*)? – Therefore nothing shows *nirvāṇa* to be neither absence of entity nor entity. And it is not logically correct to say that what is unshown, unrevealed and unperceived cognitively exists in this way [i.e. in terms of the 'neither ... nor' position]. And just as these four constructions (*kalpanā*, viz. the *koṭis*) are altogether not possible (*na sambhavanti*) in the case of *nirvāṇa*, so are these constructions not possible either in the case of the *tathāgata*, who is the comprehender (*adhigantṛ*) of *nirvāṇa*. To demonstrate this it has been said [*MMK* 25.17]
>
> *paraṃ nirodhād bhagavān bhavatīty eva nôhyate /*
> *na bhavaty ubhayaṃ cêti nôbhayaṃ ceti nôhyate //*
> That the Lord exists after cessation is not understood, and it is not understood that he does not exist, both [exists and does not exist] and neither.[67]

6. The dual function of 'neither . . . nor' sentences

Only a few verses earlier Nāgārjuna has himself stated that once the Teacher has set out the elimination of becoming and passing away it is logically correct to say that *nirvāṇa* is neither entity nor absence of entity (*MMK* 25.10):

> *prahāṇaṃ câbravīc chāstā bhavasya vibhavasya ca /*
> *tasmān na bhāvo nâbhāvo nirvāṇam iti yujyate //*

Does this statement not therefore conflict with his rejection of the applicability to *nirvāṇa* of the fourth position consisting in the bi-negation of both existence and non-existence (*MMK* 25.15–16)?

Linguistically, the difference between what Nāgārjuna has stated in 25.10cd and 25.15–16 is perhaps not as clear as might be wished; indeed the negation of the fourth *koṭi* is only formally distinguished from the negation mentioned in 25.10cd by use of the correlative particles *eva* ... *eva* (in *naiva* ... *naiva* as against *na* ... *na*).[68] Nevertheless, that there is a difference between the two statements despite the circumstance that both can be rendered by the 'neither . . . nor' formula is shown by the context and the course of Nāgārjuna's discussion. For 25.15–16 clearly represents the fourth *koṭi*, the applicability of which to *nirvāṇa* Nāgārjuna rejects; whereas 25.10 equally clearly represents the negation of the first and second *koṭis* which Nāgārjuna had just been discussing (25.4–9). And only in the following verses (25.11sq.) does Nāgārjuna actually take up the discussion of the last two *koṭis*.

The semantic and logical difference between the two statements is no less evident: whereas the negation of the first and second *koṭis* (stated in 25.10cd) does not, as a *prasajyapratiṣedha*, commit the Mādhyamika to the contrary statement about the existence of *nirvāṇa* (as either a positive or a negative entity), the fourth *koṭi* was evidently regarded as an attempt to present a description of some kind of entity, albeit one that is indeterminate, in terms of the opposition positive ('existence')/negative ('non-existence'). And it is for this reason that the Mādhyamika rejects its applicability by negating the fourth *koṭi* in addition to the other three *koṭis*.

This interpretation appears to agree with what Candrakīrti said concerning the statement that has the form 'neither so nor not so' in *MMK* 18.8.[69] There the 'neither . . . nor' statement has been syntactically formulated in just the way that the fourth position of the *catuṣkoṭi* has been formulated elsewhere (for example in 25.15–16), namely by means of the correlative particles *naiva* . . . *naiva*. This statement is considered to be an accommodation to the needs of the category of persons who have not yet completely eliminated the obstacles (*āvaraṇa*);[70] and one can no doubt conclude that, like the fourth *koṭi*, this 'neither . . . nor' statement has also in the last analysis to be negated, for it refers simply to a fictional construct.[71]

The function of 'neither . . . nor' sentences is then twofold inasmuch as they

can be used either to formulate the fourth position of the *catuṣkoṭi* or to state that neither of the positions of a conceptual schema based on a binary opposition of the type *A*/*Ā* (i.e. *koṭis* I and II) is applicable according to the Madhyamaka, and that the Middle Way does not therefore postulate the existence of any entity of which something might then be predicated in positive or negative terms.[72]

On the logical and semantic levels it accordingly appears necessary to distinguish clearly between (a) a 'neither . . . nor' sentence expressing the last position of the *catuṣkoṭi* by which some entity would be postulated as indeterminate,[73] and (b) a 'neither . . . nor' sentence where not even an indeterminate entity is posited and which serves simply to exclude, by the *prasajya* type of negation, all positions resulting from dichotomizing conceptualization that polarizes itself as *A*/*Ā* (and sometimes also in the imaginable combinations 'both *A* and *Ā*' and 'neither *A* nor *Ā*').

7. The third **koṭi** *and the question of the coincidence of opposites*

Just as the Mādhyamikas did not accept the fourth *koṭi* as applicable to the description of a real, it is equally clear that they did not posit a real combining opposite (contrary if not contradictory) properties to which opposed predicates are applicable in terms of the third *koṭi*. Ultimate reality (*paramārtha*) may indeed be sometimes described in the literature of the Mahāyāna as undeterminable and inexpressible (*anabhilāpya*); but this does not imply according to the Madhyamaka that reality may be represented as a *coincidentia oppositorum* where opposite properties converge together in some entity or essence that is to be described as both *A* and *Ā*.

For the Mādhyamika reality is as free from the third position of the *catuṣkoṭi* as it is from the others. This point has been discussed in *MMK* 25.11–14 with regard to *nirvāṇa* as both *bhāva* and *abhāva*, a position that is rejected by Nāgārjuna. And in *MMK* 27.17, 22 and 25 Nāgārjuna has rejected the conjunction (even distributed) of the qualifications *śāśvata*/*aśāśvata* and *antavat*/*anantavat*.

8. Inexpressibility and non-duality

From the point of view of the Madhyamaka doctrine of emptiness of own being (*svabhāvaśūnyatā*) and the non-substantiality of all factors (*dharma-nairātmya*), exclusively *cataphatic* language taking the form of the third as well as the first *koṭi* and exclusively *apophatic* language taking the form of the fourth as well as the second *koṭi* are equally inapplicable to reality. However, a 'neither . . . nor' sentence may on occasion be pressed into service in an attempt to indicate or reveal the *paramārtha*; but it cannot then be supposed to correspond to the (unnegated) fourth *koṭi*. And such a formulation is used because it constitutes the closest linguistic approximation available to the semioticized silence of the Ārya, the only kind of 'sign' that conforms to ultimate reality as it truly is.

It is accordingly necessary not to confound ultimate reality (*paramārtha*), which may be described as both inexpressible (*anabhilāpya*), and even as undeterminable (cf. Tib. *ma ṅes pa*), with an entity conceived of and defined as indescribable, undecidable or indeterminate which, instead of being free of all four positions of the *catuṣkoṭi*, would simply correspond to the (unnegated) fourth *koṭi*.

Furthermore, because *śūnyatā* applies to all *dharmas* without exception; no differentiation whatsoever exists between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* (*MMK* 25.19):

na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇam /
na nirvāṇasya saṃsārāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇam //

Hence also their 'limit' (*koṭi* = Tib. *mtha'*) is the same (*MMK* 25.20):

nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ koṭiḥ saṃsaraṇasya ca /
na tayor antaraṃ kiṃcit susūkṣmam api vidyate //

Here a clear distinction has to be drawn between the Buddhist theory of nonduality (*advaya*), based on the emptiness of all *dharmas*, and the monism for example of the Vedāntic *advaita* which posits one unique spiritual entity from which there is no real differentiation.[74]

The fact that the Mādhyamika does not find the four positions to be applicable and that he negates the statements in which these positions are accepted does not of course imply that he considers the method of analysis based on the *catuṣkoṭi* as useless. On the contrary, when properly employed for the purpose of the investigation of concepts and (pseudo-) entities, they prove to be an eminently valuable instrument for philosophical analysis of which the Mādhyamika has made abundant use. Such analyses on occasion bring the Mādhyamika to a consideration of transactional linguistic usage (e.g. in *MMK* 24.18 on *prajñapti* and 18.10 on the *abhidhātavya*) and of discursive development that is linguistic as well as conceptual (e.g. *MMK* 18.9 and 24.24), although the purely linguistic aspect of philosophical analysis has not been pursued in special detail by the earlier Mādhyamikas.

9. Canonical sources

In the foregoing the discussion has been concerned with the uses and interpretations of the *koṭis* given by the older masters of the Madhyamaka school, but as observed at the beginning the basic principles we have been considering were known earlier since they appear in some parts of the Āgamas/Nikāyas.

In this connexion Nāgārjuna has referred in *MMK* 15.7 to the only Āgama text which he explicity mentions by name in this treatise, the Kātyāyanāvavāda of the Saṃyuktāgama. In that canonical text it has been said that conventional transactional usage in the world is based on the set of dichotomous concepts

comprised by the pair existence/non-existence, which the Buddha is shown in that Sūtra to have analysed and rejected.[75] This pair of concepts makes up two of the most frequently discussed *Koṭis* or positions. Candrakīrti has remarked that this canonical text has been recognized by all the Buddhist schools (*sarvanikāya*), an observation that is supported by the fact that a parallel passage is found in the Saṃyuttanikāya transmitted by the Theravāda school.[76] And he aptly concludes that, since speculation based on the dichotomies of own being (*svabhāva*)/other being (*parabhāva*) and existence/non-existence are equally in conflict with the Buddha's teaching, intelligent people will attach themselves to neither of these speculative opinions.[77]

The rejection of the positions that postulate the existence of *ātman* and *anātman* mentioned in *MMK* 18.6 (cf. 27.12–3 and *Ratnāvalī* 2.3) is supported by *Kāśyapaparivarta* § 57, which Candrakīrti has quoted in his comment.

10. The logical structure of the catuṣkoṭi *and its negation*

As already mentioned, the Mādhyamika commentators of both the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika schools, Bhāvaviveka and Candrakīrti, have taken the negation of the four positions to be of the *prasajya* or absolute kind. This means that the negation of the first position does not commit the person who maintains it to the affirmation of the opposite statement, corresponding to the second position. And the same principle holds for the negation of the other positions. This point has been emphasized by the Mādhyamikas at least since the sixth century, the time of Bhāvaviveka.[78]

It is noteworthy also that Bhāvaviveka regards the Mādhyamika propositions (*pratijñā*) consisting in the negation of the four positions as belonging, despite their verbalized form and consequent discursivity (*prapañca*), not to the level of surface convention (*saṃvṛti*) to which the *prapañca* is normally assigned, but rather to a special form of *paramārtha* that entails construction (*abhisaṃskāra*). This level is termed pure worldly knowledge (*śuddhalaukikajñāna*) in order to distinguish it from the supramundane (*lokottara*) nature of the supreme *paramārtha*, which is quite free from *prapañca* and cannot therefore be verbalized.[79]

With respect to the syntactical and logical structure of the *catuṣkoṭi*, on the other hand, the Madhyamaka school has had very little to say. This attitude of the school, which so markedly sets it apart from many modern writers on the subject, indicates that the questions raised by these modern writers as to whether the four *koṭis* stand in a relation of conjunction or disjunction and whether the terms are contraries or contradictories were not of primary importance to the school. Now this attitude of the school appears intelligible and valid when we consider that the Mādhyamikas have negated all four positions because they maintained that, severally or in combination, they do not ultimately apply to any *dharma*; and the universe of discourse along with all dichotomizing conceptualization is thus annulled.[80]

The formulation given to the statement of the *catuṣkoṭi* by the Mādhyamika

masters is moreover variable. Nāgārjuna has connected some of the positions in *MMK* 25.17–18 and 27.13 by the particle *ca* 'and'; but in 22.11 *vā* 'or' appears side by side with *ca*.[81] In *Catuḥśataka* 8.20, 14.21 and 16.25 we find only *ca*. In *MMK* 1.1 some of the positions have been linked by the correlative particles *api* ... *api*. Similarly, in 18.6 Nāgārjuna has linked the two positions *ātmêti* and *anātmêti*, taught in differing circumstances by the Buddha, by the particles *api* ... *api*; and in introducing this verse Candrakīrti has mentioned the possibility of a conflict (*virodha*) between these two teachings emanating from the same source.[82]

With regard to the 'both ... and' formulation, in *MMK* 25.14 the relation between existence (*bhāva*) and non-existence (*abhāva*) is compared to the mutually exclusive relation between light and darkness in one time and place, i.e. to contrariety (*virodha*); this explanation is given with respect to the supposition that *nirvāṇa* might be definable in terms of the third *koṭi* as both *bhāva* and *abhāva*.[83] In *MMK* 27.17 and 25 which deal with the inapplicability of the opposites *divya/mānuṣa, śāśvata/aśāśvata* and *antavat/anantavat*, Nāgārjuna alludes to and rejects an interpretation of the third position that distributes the terms of the conjunction by using the words *ekadeśaḥ* ... *ekadeśaḥ* (= *aṃśena* ... *aṃśena*) 'part(ly) ... part(ly)'.

As for the fourth position referred to in *MMK* 27.18, it is suggested that only on the assumption that both the eternal and non-eternal were established (*siddha*) would something be said to be neither eternal nor non-eternal. But Candrakīrti observes that such a supposition does not in fact apply since things are never actually so established.

The Mādhyamika materials cited above do not then support the contention that the connexion between the *koṭis* is regularly one of exclusive disjunction rather than of conjunction.[84] As for the idea that the pairs of terms in the third and fourth *koṭis* are contraries rather than contradictories,[85] there is indeed some support for it here and there in the sources; but these sources do not make the point explicitly, and in any case in certain contexts the terms are evidently contradictories. (Nor, as already observed, does it appear that the point was of major concern to the school because of the fact that all the *koṭis* are to be negated with a view to breaking down the dichotomizing universe of conceptualization and discourse.) Whereas Nāgārjuna and his school have alluded to an interpretation according to which in the third *koṭi* the terms may be distributed, this interpretation has in fact been considered inapplicable by them; and there seems to be no clear evidence for regular logical distribution and quantification in our sources.[86] Finally, there does not appear to be any support at all in the Mādhyamika sources for the contention that the fourth *koṭi* supposes a neutral third position between opposites.[87]

III. Conjunction and negation of opposed terms in *Vijñānavāda* definitions of reality

A basic concept in the Yogācāra/Vijñānavāda school is the *abhūtaparikalpa* which is identified as the dependent nature (*paratantrasvabhāva*), the second of the three natures postulated by this school.[88] It is represented as both existent in virtue of the third aspect or nature – the *parinispannasvabhāva* – and free from existence with respect to the first aspect or nature – the *parikalpitasvabhāva*, i.e. the duality of cognized and cognizer (*grāhyagrāhaka*).[89] In other words, on the negative side of the empty (*śūnya*), although *abhūtaparikalpa* becomes associated with the imaginarily constructed duality of subject and object, it is in fact really free of it and empty. And on the positive side, *abhūtaparikalpa* represents real (*paramārthatas*) existence in virtue of own nature (*svabhāvatas*) and even *substantialiter* (*dravyatas*).[90] The concept is therefore bound up with a 'both ... and' position.

Abhūtaparikalpa is moreover described as being neither empty nor not empty, and the concept thus involves also a 'neither ... nor' position.[91]

The question therefore arises as to what the attitude of the Yogācārins/ Vijñānavādins is towards these two positions in respect to their theory of reality.

1. The 'both ... and' formula in relation to abhūtaparikalpa *and* upalabdhi

On the ontological level the Vijñānavādin speaks both of *sattva* 'existence' with respect to *abhūtaparikalpa* and *śūnyatā*, and of *asattva* 'non-existence' with respect to duality. In fact, for the Vijñānavāda, this is what constitutes the Middle Way. Thus we read in the *Madhyāntavibhāga* (1.3cd):

> *sattvād asattvāt sattvāc ca madhyamā pratipac ca sā //*
> Because of existence [of *abhūtaparikalpa*], non-existence [of duality in *abhūtaparikalpa*] and existence [of *śūnyatā* in *abhūtaparikalpa* and of *abhūtaparikalpa* in *śūnyatā*] this is the Middle Way.[92]

Accordingly, the Middle Way is so called because it avoids both denial (*apavāda*) of the real – i.e. the dependent and absolute natures (*paratantra*° and *parinispanna-svabhāva*) – and imputation (*samāropa*) of the unreal – i.e. the imaginarily constructed nature (*parikalpitasvabhāva*).

On the gnoseological level also the Yogācārin speaks both of non-apprehension based on apprehension and of non-apprehension based on non-apprehension (*MAV* 1.7):

> *upalabdhiṃ samāśritya nopalabdhiḥ prajāyate /*
> *nopalabdhiṃ samāśritya nopalabdhiḥ prajāyate //*

That is, non-apprehension of an object apart from cognition is established in a first phase, on the basis of apprehension of pure representation (*vijñaptimātra*).[93] But in a second phase, on the basis of this non-apprehension of an object, non-apprehension of *vijñaptimātra* itself is established; for the latter would only have reality, in terms of the subject/object dichotomy, if its object were real, which has been seen not to be the case in the first phase (*MAVBh* 1.7).[94] The fact that apprehension has the own being of non-apprehension is thus established, and this in turn leads to what is termed equality of apprehension and non-apprehension (*MAV* 1.8):

> *upalabdheḥ tataḥ siddhā nopalabdhisvabhāvatā /*
> *tasmāc ca samatā jñeyā nopalambhopalambhayoḥ //*

This concept of the equality of the two as constituting the real nature of knowledge accordingly introduces once again a 'both ... and' formulation, the real being thought of here as determinable in terms of both presence and absence of apprehension (*upalabdhi, upalambha*).

Since the Yogācārin thus appears to be quite prepared to qualify what he considers real by two sets of dichotomously opposed terms, it is necessary to enquire what this signifies in the frame of his philosophical system.

In his commentary on this passage Vasubandhu has simply stated that apprehension is not established as being apprehension (*upalabdhir upalabdhitvenā-siddhā*). Yet, he adds, apprehension is still mentioned here because an unreal object does appear (*abhūtārthapratibhāsatayā*), even though it has the nature of non-apprehension (*anupalabdhisvabhāvā*) (*MAVBh* 1.8).

Sthiramati for his part is clearly aware of our present problem, for he explains that there is here no contradiction (*virodha*) between the two propositions. He writes:

> 'Hence', i.e. because of absence of apprehension in the absence of an *artha* to be apprehended. When speaking of apprehension, one supposes one of [three factors]: action, agent and instrument.[95] But because of the absence of an object[96] this triad is not possible here. ...[97] Apprehension having non-apprehension for its nature, *samatā* – i.e. equivalence (*tulyatā*) – is therefore to be recognized; for there is no difference given the fact that there is neither non-apprehension of an object nor apprehension which is pure representation (*vijñaptimātropalambha*).[98] In order to exclude mutual contradiction between the terms 'apprehension' and 'non-apprehension' [Vasubandhu] has said: "Yet apprehension is mentioned because an unreal *artha* appears." However, nothing at all is apprehended by this [apprehension] because of the absence of an object. Hence, from the point of view of the absolute (*paramārtha*) [it is said in the *MAVBh*]: "Though having the nature of non-apprehension"; and there is therefore no contradiction (*virodha*) (*MAVṬ* 1.8).

According to some authorities cited by Sthiramati, apprehension and non-apprehension function as counteragents against imputation (*samāropa*) and denial (*apavāda*); and the pair of them is equal in virtue of the absence of dichotomizing conceptualization (*samam etad ubhayaṃ nirvikalpatayā*, p. 23). Now, because of the fact that apprehension and non-apprehension are exempt from imputation and denial, introspective equality (*pratyātmasamatā*) is to be recognized, this being according to the authorities cited what is expressed by the well-known verse

> *nâpaneyam ataḥ kiṃciṭ prakṣepta⟨vyam na kiṃcana /*
> *draṣṭavyaṃ bhūtato bhūtaṃ bhūtadarśī vimucyate⟩ //*
> Nothing is to be removed from it and nothing is to be added: the real is to be seen as real, and the seer of the real is released.[99]

2. *The 'neither ... nor' formula in relation to* abhūtaparikalpa

To turn now to the 'neither ... nor' type of statement in the Vijñānavāda, we find that Vasubandhu has the following to say on the subject of *abhūtaparikalpa*. Since, following *MAV* 1.4, there is no object separate from cognition, and since cognition as the correlate of an object in a subject/object relation is therefore itself unreal, Vasubandhu affirms that the nature of *abhūtaparikalpa* is not as it appears. Still it is not altogether non-existent because there exists the arising of error as such *bhrāntimātra*), and because the existence of *abhūtaparikalpa* is required for release to be achieved.[100] In other words, were *abhūtaparikalpa* non-existent neither bondage nor release would be known (*MAVBh* 1.5). Moreover, if *abhūtaparikalpa* is then *neither* as it appears – i.e. as affected by duality – *nor* altogether non-existent – because it is the condition for error and for release – this is to be understood in terms of the theory of the three natures (*svabhāva*) of the Yogācāra. That is, *abhūtaparikalpa* as *paratantrasvabhāva* exists as such: whereas it *is not* as it appears when affected by the subject/object duality of the *parikalpitasvabhāva*, once freed from the latter it *is* the perfect nature of the *pariniṣpannasvabhāva* (*MAVBh* 1.6).

This is then the meaning of the following key passage of the *MAV* (1.2–3ab):

> *abhūtaparikalpo 'sti dvayaṃ tatra na vidyate /*
> *śūnyatā vidyate tv atra, tasyām api sa vidyate //*
> *na śūnyaṃ nâpi cáśūnyaṃ tasmāt sarvaṃ vidhīyate /*
> The *abhūtaparikalpa* exists. Duality is not found therein. But here *śūnyatā* is found, and this [*abhūtaparikalpa*] is found in this [*śūnyatā*] also. Therefore all is set forth as neither empty nor non-empty.[101]

The Vijñānavāda system thus differs from the Madhyamaka inasmuch as for it the 'both ... and' and 'neither ... nor' formulae refer to a *vastu*: the

paratantrasvabhāva or *abhūtaparikalpa* that is real *qua* substantive thing (*dravyatas*).[102] It is nevertheless far from certain that in this case the Vijñānavāda school was attempting to establish some entity as *per se* either *both* existent *and* non-existent or *neither* existent *nor* non-existent. On the contrary, the school insists that this *vastu* is real and existent. And it is said to be non-existent only to the limited – and indeed quite illusory – degree to which its appearances are unreal because they belong to the realm of duality and imaginary construction; but this unreality clearly does not apply to the real *per se*. Given what is intended by the school, then, it would seem that in the matter of the definition of reality the Vijñānavādins have rejected neither the principle of non-contradiction nor the principle of the excluded middle. For in *one respect* the *abhūtaparikalpa* is existent and non-empty – namely with regard to the *paratantra* and *pariniṣpanna* natures – and in *another respect* it is non-existent and empty — namely with regard to the *parikalpita*. nature and its duality;[103] and there seems therefore to be no question here of attributing to one and the same entity opposed properties on the same level of reference and from the same point of view.

3. The 'neither . . . nor' formula and **śūnyatā**

The 'neither ... nor' formula reappears, together with simple affirmation and negation, in connexion with the discussion of the defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of emptiness (*MAV* 1.14):

> *dvayābhāvo hy abhāvasya bhāvaḥ śūnyasya lakṣaṇam /*
> *na bhāvo nâpi câbhāvaḥ na pr̥thaktvaikalakṣaṇam //*
> Indeed [there is] non-ens (*abhāva:dṅos po med pa*) of duality (*dvaya* 'couple') [consisting in] ens (*bhāva:dṅos po*) of [this] non-ens, the characteristic of empti[ness].[104] There is neither existence (*bhāva:yod pa*) nor non-existence (*abhāva:med pa*).[105] There is no characteristic of [either] difference [or] identity.

Vasubandhu explains: (i) There is non-ens of object and subject as a duality. (ii) And since the ens of this non-ens is the characteristic of emptiness, it is indicated that emptiness has the own being (*svabhāva*) of non-ens (*abhāva*). (iii). This own being comprised of the non-ens of a duality is 'neither existence nor non-existence'. (a) In what way is there not existence? – Because there is non-ens of a duality. (b) And in what way is there not non-existence? – Because there is ens of the non-ens of a duality. Such is the characteristic of emptiness. (iv) It is for this reason that [it is said in the *MAV*] 'There is no characteristic of [either] difference [or] identity' in relation to *abhūtaparikalpa*. Were there difference, there would arise the impossibility consisting in real nature (*dharmatā*) being other than the thing (*dharma*, to which it relates) – like impermanence and painfulness (*anityatāduḥkhatāvat*) [of what is impermanent and painful].[106] And

[conversely] were there identity, there would be no objective base for purification (*viśuddhyālambana*) – gnosis (*jñāna*)[107] – and no general characteristic (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*)[108] In this way the characteristic free from identity and difference (*tattvānyatvavinirmukta*) has been indicated.

Sthiramati analyses this verse and Vasubandhu's explanation in his subcommentary. He first takes up single negation and affirmation (points i and ii above), making the following observations:

1. There is non-existence (*abhāva*) with respect to *vastu*-nature because duality – i.e. the cognized and cognizer – is imaginarily constructed (*parikalpita*) (a) in *abhūtaparikalpa* or (b) by *abhūtaparikalpa*.[109]
2. Concerning *bhāva* (*dṅos po*) of *abhāva* (*dṅos po med pa*), the essential nature of the non-ens of duality is existence. Otherwise the empty ens of non-ens would not exist, and the ens of duality would then exist. For this reason Vasubandhu has referred to *śūnyatā*'s having the characteristic of the own being of *abhāva* (*abhāvasvabhāvalakṣaṇatva*), rather than a characteristic consisting of *bhāva* (*bhāvarūpalakṣaṇa*).[110]
3. Some hold the opinion that the word *bhāva* is redundant when the term *abhāva* serves, as it does here, to negate *bhāva*, so that even if the word *bhāva* were lacking here its sense would be understood implicitly. But Sthiramati observes that it is in fact not redundant; for if nothing more were indicated than *dvayābhāva* being the characteristic of emptiness, it would be principally the non-ens of duality that would be understood – like the non-ens of a hare's horn – but not what has to be understood, namely the fact of being real nature (*dharmatā*) – like the painfulness (*duḥkhatā*), etc., of what is painful (*duḥkha*), etc. Therefore non-ens of duality is *śūnyatā*; it is present in *abhūtaparikalpa* and is known as *śūnyatā*. Here reference has been made to *dharmatā*-nature because of the inclusion of the characteristic of the *bhāva* of *abhāva*. – Alternatively, it can be held that when *dvayābhāva* is spoken of as *sūnyatā* the word non-existence (*abhāva* = *med pa*) designates the general (*samānyavācin*), so that it is not known what *abhāva* is meant. Therefore, in order to indicate absolute absence (*atyantābhāva* = *gtan med pa*), it has been stated that in *abhūtaparikalpa* there is *bhāva* (*dṅos po*) of *abhāva* (*dṅos po med pa*) of duality.[111] Because in this case the characteristic of the *abhāva* of *bhāva* is assumed, *atyantābhāva* (*gtan dṅos po med pa*) of the cognized and cognizer is indicated as *śūnyatā*.

Next bi-negation is taken up by Sthiramati in the following observations which relate to points iii and iv above:

1. In reply to the question as to how an absolute (*paramārtha*) is spoken of if *śūnyatā* in fact consists in non-existence (*abhāva:med pa*), Sthiramati explains: It is spoken of because this *paramārtha* is the object of supreme

gnosis (*paramajñāna*)[112] – like in the case of the impermanence [of what is impermanent] – but not because it is a substantive thing (*vastu*).[113]

2. If *śūnyatā* had the quality of being an existent (*bhāvatva:yod pa*), there would be no absolute absence (*atyantābhāva*) of duality (*dvayabhāva*), no being the real nature (*dharmatā*) of *abhūtaparikalpa*; and so it has been stated that it is not existent.
3. As for its not being non-existent either, non-ens of duality does not consist of *abhāva* having the form of *abhāva* of duality (*dvayabhāva*). Were it such *abhāva* pure and simple, there would be existence of duality; and there would be no *dharmatā* of *abhūtaparikalpa* – like the impermanence and painfulness [of what is impermanent and painful].
4. Reference has then been made to neither existence nor non-existence because this represents the nature of the non-ens of a permanent (*nitya*) and blissful substance imputed in error by a living being (*sems can phyin ci log tu gyur pas sgro btags pa'i rtag pa dań / bde ba'i dńos po'i dńos po med pa'i ńo bo ñid yin pas*).
5. Now, if *śūnyatā* of *abhūtaparikalpa* is *dharmatā*, is this stateable (*vaktavya*) as other (*anya*) than *abhūtaparikalpa* or as not other (*ananya*)?[114]
   (a) Vasubandhu has stated: "Were there difference, there would arise the impossibility consisting in the real nature (*dharmatā*) being other than the thing (*dharma*, to which it relates)." – What would be the incongruence (*ayoga*) here? – The real nature (of a thing, *dharmatā*) becomes another thing by having a characteristic different from the thing to which it relates, just like any thing other than it. Now one thing cannot be the real nature of another thing; for there would then be infinite regress (*anavasthā*) since still another thing would then have to be sought for [as the real nature of the second thing]. "Just as in the case of impermanence and painfulness"; i.e. just as *anityatā* is not other than what is impermanent (*anitya*) and *duḥkhatā* is not other than what is painful (*duḥkha*), so *śūnyatā* is not other than what is empty (*śūnya*).
   (b) Vasubandhu has furthermore stated: "Were there identity, there would be no objective base for purification (*viśuddhyālambana*), and no general characteristic (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*)." That is, the path being purification inasmuch as it is the means for purification, there would be no objectification of the path, like the specific characteristic of a *dharma*, because there is no difference from the specific characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*) of that *dharma*. Nor is any general characteristic (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) therefore possible because it is not other than the specific characteristic. Also commonness (*sāmānyatā:mñam pa ñid*) is lost, there being mutual difference just as in the case of the nature of a *dharma*. – Alternatively, because the specific characteristic is not other than this [general one] there is absence of difference, just as in the case of the nature of an entity. Nor would there be any general characteristic either because the general characteristic is by definition dependent on

difference [between it and the particular things having a specific characteristic]. – Alternatively, the expression *viśuddhyālambana* means an objective base for realizing purification (*rnam par dag par byed pa'i phyir*). And purification is not attained through objectification of a specific characteristic; for all sentient beings would then be already purified.[115]

6. As for *śūnyatā* being indefinable (*avaktavyā*) with respect to difference and identity[116] in relation to *abhūtaparikalpa*, Sthiramati observes that the Vijñānavāda notion of indefinability is not reducible here to the Nirgrantha's concept of non-determinateness because the Nirgrantha doctrine posits an existent *bhāva* (*dṅos po*) which is in fact determinable as being neither different nor identical (*bhāvasya satas tattvānyatvam*). But *śūnyatā* is not such *bhāva* (*dṅos po*), and there is therefore no difficulty in the Vijñānavāda theory.[117]

It is, Sthiramati concludes, for these reasons that *śūnyatā* has been indicated in *MAV* 1.14 as (i) having the characteristic of *abhāva* (*med pa'i mćhan ñid*) [of duality] (ii) having the characteristic of the own being of *abhāva* [of duality] (*dṅos po med pa'i ṅo bo ñid kyi mćhan ñid*), (iii) having the characteristic of no duality (i.e. *no bhāvo nâpy abhāvaḥ*) (*mi gñis pa'i mćhan ñid*), and (iv) having the characteristic of being free from identity and difference (*tattvānyatva*) (*de ñid daṅ gžan las rnam par grol ba'i mćhan ñid*).

Thus, in contradistinction to his procedure in the case of the *abhūtaparikalpa* or *paratantrasvabhāva* to which he has not applied the 'both ... and' or the 'neither ... nor' formula on the same level of reference and from the same point of view (see above), here in the case of *śūnyatā* or the *pariniṣpannasvabhāva* the Vijñānavādin has made use of a statement negating simultaneously two opposed qualities. It should nevertheless be observed that, unlike *abhūtaparikalpa* which is regarded as a real *vastu, śūnyatā* or *paramārtha* is stated by Sthiramati not to be a *vastu* or *bhāva*.[118] This difference in the metaphysical status of the two factors may be crucial in deciding whether opposed qualities are predicable of it even in the form of their bi-negation in the 'neither ... nor' type of formula. If so, this could well account for the difference in treatment of the two levels of reality.

But the Vijñānavāda concept of *śūnyatā* continues to pose problems since not infrequently *śūnyatā* is presented as virtually some kind of entity. This view of *śūnyatā* comes to the fore for example in the commentaries on *MAV* 1.21:

> *pudgalasyâtha dharmāṇām abhāvaḥ śūnyatâtra hi /*
> *tadabhāvasya sadbhāvas tasmin sā śūnyatâparā //*
> The non-ens (*abhāva:dṅos po med pa*) of the individual as well as of the factors of existence is indeed here *śūnyatā*. The real existence in this[119] of their *abhāva* is another *śūnyatā*.

Vasubandhu explains: The non-ens of *pudgala* and *dharmas* is *śūnyatā*. And the existence (*sadbhāva: dṅos po yod pa*) of their non-ens in this aforementioned enjoyer, etc., is another *śūnyatā*. For the purpose of making known this characteristic of *śūnyatā*, a twofold *śūnyatā* has been set out – viz. *abhāvaśūnyatā* and *abhāvasvabhāvaśūnyatā*[120] – which serve to exclude respectively the imputation (*samāropa*) of *pudgala* and *dharmas* and the negation (*apavāda*) of their emptiness (*MAVBh* 1.21).

Now, in commenting on this passage, Sthiramati stresses the notion of *śūnyatā* as some kind of existent. Had the *abhāvaśūnyatā* not been stated, he writes, the undesired consequence would have been that *pudgalas* and *dharmas* having an imaginarily constructed (*parikalpita*) nature would exist. And had the *abhāvasvabhāvaśūnyatā* not been stated, the undesired consequence would have arisen of the non-existence of *śūnyatā*, as a result of which *pudgala* and *dharmas* would in fact exist (*MAVṬ* 1.21). In other words, while the fifteenth aspect of *śūnyatā* serves to cancel the existence of *pudgala* and *dharmas*, the sixteenth aspect imparts to emptiness a kind of own being without which the existence of *pudgala* and *dharmas* would not be cancelled.

This notion of *śūnyatā* as some kind of existent is clearly quite different from that of the Mādhyamika theory, which stresses the fact that it is not the function of *śūnyatā* to make *dharmas* empty but that *śūnyatā* simply reveals that *dharmas* are empty.[121] But, as already observed, in another place Sthiramati has himself taken care to state that *śūnyatā* is not to be regarded as a *vastu* or *bhāva*.[122]

4. The 'neither . . . nor' formula in the description of ultimate reality

The concept of the absolute as neither some thing nor not that thing appears elsewhere in the literature of the Vijñānavāda.

In Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā* – which has been supposed to be by another Vasubandhu than the author of the *MAVBh*[123] – the *pariniṣpanna* or absolute nature is described as neither different nor not different from the *paratantra* or dependent nature (22):

> *ata eva sa naivânyo nânanyaḥ paratantrataḥ /*
> *anityatādivad vācyo nâdṛṣṭe 'smin sa dṛśyate //*
> This [absolutely perfect nature] is consequently neither different nor not different from the dependent [nature]. It is to be described as like impermanence, etc. [in relation to what is impermanent, etc.]; and the [dependent nature] is not known when this [absolutely perfect nature] is unknown.

In his comment Sthiramati explains that *dharmatā* – namely the *paratantra*'s exemption (*rahitatā*, corresponding to the *pariniṣpanna* level) from the imaginarily constructed (*parikalpita*) nature – is properly neither different nor not

different from the [corresponding] *dharma*; and consequently, since the *parinispanna* is *paratantradharmatā*, it is neither different nor not different from the *paratantra*. Indeed, he adds, if the *parinispanna* were different from the *paratantra* the latter would not be empty (*śūnya*) of the *parikalpita*. But on the other hand were it not different, the *parinispanna* could not be the support of purification (*viśuddhyālambana*) because it would comprise defilements (*kleśa*), just like the *paratantra*; while at the same time, because the *paratantra* would not be different from the *parinispanna*, it would not comprise defilement. Here just as in his commentary on the *MAV* Sthiramati, following the lead of Vasubandhu,[124] draws a comparison with impermanence, painfulness and absence of self (*anātmyatā*) as the generic characteristics respectively of what is impermanent, painful and non-self. In this connexion attention needs to be drawn also to the treatment of the defining characteristic of ultimate reality in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (6.1):

> *na san na câsan na tathā na cânyathā na jāyate vyeti na câvahīyate /*
> *na vardhate nâpi viśudhyate punar viśudhyate tat paramārtha-lakṣaṇam //*
>
> Neither existent nor non-existent, neither so nor otherwise; it neither comes into existence nor passes away, it neither decreases nor increases, and it is not purified yet is purified: this is the characteristic of the absolute.[125]

The Bhāṣya specifies that since the *paramārtha* has non-duality (*advaya*) as its sense it has been set out in these five aspects: (i) neither existent, i.e. by the *parikalpita*° and *paratantra-lakṣaṇa*, nor non-existent, i.e by the *parinispanna-lakṣaṇa*; (ii) neither so, owing to absence of identity of the *parinispanna* with the *parikalpita* and *paratantra*, nor otherwise, owing to absence of difference from them; (iii) neither coming into existence nor passing away, because the *dharmadhātu* is causally unconstructed (*anabhisaṃskṛta*); (iv) neither decrease nor increase, because the *paramārtha* remains as it is when affects (*saṃkleśa*) come to a stop and purification (*vyavadāna*) manifests; and (v) neither is it purified, owing to natural non-defilement, nor is it not purified, owing to the dispersal of the adventitious defilements (*āgantukopakleśa*). It is in this way, the Bhāṣya concludes, that the fivefold characteristic of non-duality (*advayalakṣaṇa*) is the *paramārtha-lakṣaṇa*.[126]

In this way the Bhāṣya has made it clear that the negation of opposite predicates with respect to the *paramārtha* has the purpose of showing that it is characterized by non-duality. In other words, both terms of the conceptually opposed pairs are negated because either fails to apply to the *paramārtha*, which the Mahāyāna always holds to be beyond the binary tension of *vikalpa* and *prapañca*.

IV. Negation of opposed terms in the description of the absolute in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*

The *dharma*(*ratna*) – the second of the seven adamantine planes (*vajrapada*) treated in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* – is described in one of the Kārikās or basic verses of this text in terms of the negation of all four positions making up a *catuṣkoṭi* (1.9ab):

> *yo nâsan na ca san na câpi sadasan nânyaḥ sato nâsataḥ śakyaḥ*
> *tarkayitum niruktyapagataḥ pratyātmavedyaḥ śivaḥ /*

If we adopt in the second part of this verse the manuscript reading *śakyas*, which is confirmed by the Tibetan translation, the sense corresponds largely with that of the passage of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (6.1) discussed above.[127] And this interpretation is supported by *RGV* 1.12, where it is stated that the truth of cessation (*nirodhasatya*) – which is what the *dharma* is in its ultimate aspect[128] – is inconceivable (*acintya*) because it is not within the purview of speculative (hypothetical) thinking (*tarka*), which would necessarily take it as being non-existent, existent, both existent and non-existent, or neither the one nor the other (*asatsatsadasannobhayaprakārais caturbhiḥ api tarkāgocaratvāt, RGVV* 1.12).[129] According to this reading and interpretation, the meaning of verse 1.9ab then is:

> [That sun-like Dharma (*dharmadivākara*)] cannot be thought of speculatively as non-existent, existent, [both] existent and non-existent, and also as other than the existent and non-existent; it is free from verbalization, to be known directly and still. . .

That is, the four limiting positions, singly or in combination, are the only modes under which an entity can be discursively and speculatively conceived. But either singly or in combination they are not applicable to the absolute.[130] Elsewhere also the *RGV* has stressed the inexpressibility in words and the conceptual unthinkability of the *paramārtha*.[131]

The terminology employed in the *RGV* as well as the idea expressed is quite in line with the bulk of the Mahāyānist literature, both Sūtras and Sāstras. To mention only a few parallels with passages of the *Mūlamadhyama-kakārikās* already discussed above, the use of the epithet *śiva* to refer to absolute reality as 'tranquil' or 'still', and thus beyond the binary tension of discursive development (*prapañca*) and dichotomizing conceptualization (*vikalpa*), recalls *MMK* 25.24 and 18.9 (where we find *śānta* instead of *śiva*).[132] And the expression *niruktyapagata* 'free from verbalization' – which the commentator glosses by *anabhilāpya* 'inexpressible' (*RGVV* 1.12) – may be compared with *prapañcātīta* in *MMK* 22.15 and *aprapañcita* in 18.9.[133] Also, the notion of *tarka* as speculative (hypothetical) thinking is not without connexion with *vikalpa*.[134] As such,

the *paramārtha* is only to be known directly and immediately (*pratyātmavedya*); as the *MMK* (18.7) puts it, on the level of *dharmatā* or *nirvāṇa* the nameable (*abhidhātavya*) ceases when what is in the scope of discursive thinking is stopped.

Still, there seems to be no suggestion here that reality – *dharma* as *nirodhasatya* – is some kind of illogical and irrational entity, only that it cannot be categorized in terms of the binary tension of discursive thinking and that it may therefore be appropriately treated in an apophatic manner.[135]

At the same time other passages of our *RGV* as well as of the Sūtras on which it is based, with the Sūtras treating of the *tathāgatagarbha* in the forefront, certainly do not eschew cataphaticism. Thus, especially in treatments of the *paramārtha* (which are by their very nature so to speak 'raids on the unspeakable') apophaticism and cataphaticism come to be used in 'torsional' complementarity in the (no doubt paradoxical) attempt to lend conceptual form and verbal expression to the *paramārtha*. This 'torsional' complementarity is also perhaps to be found in another form in the Vijñānavāda theory of *śūnyatā* discussed above. But in the scholastic treatises of the Madhyamaka with which we started our discussion and in which all four 'positions' of the *catuṣkoṭi* are negated, the approach of Nāgārjuna and his followers has been thoroughly apophatic.

V. The Vātsīputrīya conception of the indeterminate

The Vātsīputrīyas defined the *pudgala* or 'individual' they posited as neither different nor not different from the five groups (*skandha*), and hence as indeterminate (*avaktavya, avācya*).

The doctrine of this school is known to us mainly from accounts and refutations of it by other Buddhists, one of the earlier sources being the ninth chapter of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (ca. 5th century). There it is stated that the Vātsīputrīya theory entails postulating a fifth category called the indeterminate (*avaktavya*, literally 'unstateable') in addition to the three within the conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) – viz. past, present and future – and the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). But as an indeterminate factor it is not stateable as either a fifth category or not a fifth category in relation to the four above-mentioned categories.[136]

In the same chapter Vasubandhu has also alluded to the question of the *jīva*, one of the factors contained in the list of *avyākṛtavastus* discussed at the beginning of this paper. Vasubandhu explains that the Blessed One has not spoken of a *jīva* in terms of either identity or difference (*tattvānyatva*) since it does not exist. Nor has he ascribed non-existence to it lest a nominal (*prājñaptika*) or fictitious entity possess the property of even non-existence.[137]

A comparable approach to the question of an indeterminate factor that cannot be defined in terms of identity and difference has been adopted by Candrakīrti. In his *Prasannapadā* he observes that when establishing a characterized thing

along with its defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) one would have to resort to the category of identity and difference because there is no other course (*gati*); and when this proves impossible the conclusion is that the thing does not exist.[138] Indeed, whatever cannot be determined in terms of identity and difference in relation to some entity cannot be said to exist even on the surface level (*saṃvṛti*).[139] The five speculative theses concerning the relation between an *ātman* and the *skandhas*, which are discussed also in Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* (6.142–4), are said to be subsumed under the thesis of identity and difference (*tattvānyatvapakṣa*).[140]

In the eighth century, in a discussion of the Vātsīputrīya doctrine in his *Tattvasaṃgraha*,[141] Śāntarakṣita has noted that the *pudgala* was held by this school to be free of both identity and difference (*tattvānyatva*) in relation to the *skandhas* (336) and that it was therefore supposed to have the property of indeterminateness (*avācyatā*) (337). But Śāntarakṣita immediately reminds his reader that a real entity (*vastu*) does not transcend the category of identity and difference (339–42); for there is in fact no other course (*gatyantara*) for a real thing, as Kamalaśīla observes in agreement with other masters.[142] The conclusion is accordingly that no ultimately real (*pāramārthika*) *pudgala* exists; being indeterminate, its ontological status is that of a water-lily growing in empty space (338).

Śāntarakṣita has moreover observed (344) that union with two opposed properties (*viruddhadharma*) must entail a difference between entities (rather than something like a coincidence of opposites). Consequently, since the *skandhas* are recognized to be not only impermanent but also determinable (*vācya*) with respect to their mutual identity/difference whereas the *pudgala* is supposed not to be so determinable, such a *pudgala* would have to be different from the *skandhas*, contrary to what the Vātsīputrīyas have supposed (346).

In his discussion of certain canonical passages containing specified negation (*viśeṣapratiṣedha*) of a relation between a self and the *skandhas* to which Śāntarakṣita has referred at the end of his section on the Vātsīputrīya doctrine, finally, Kamalaśīla notes that in contradistinction to general negation (*sāmānyapratiṣedha*) specified negation entails the affirmation of the opposite (*anyavidhināntarīyaka*). For example, when I say "I do not see with my left eye" it is implicitly understood that I see with my right eye; for were I totally blind I should simply say "I do not see", without the above-mentioned specification. Now, since in the Sūtras it has been stated that *ātman* is not the *skandhas*, is it not implicitly indicated (*sūcita*) by the use of specified negation that there in fact exists a self which has some other characteristic (*vilakṣaṇa*) and which is indeterminate (*avācya*) in relation to the *skandhas*? The answer suggested is that such specified negation simply serves to reject the twenty specific kinds of speculative views postulating a self, namely the views that *ātman* is *rūpa* (or *vedanā, saṃjñā, saṃskāras, vijñāna*), is in *rūpa* (etc.), possesses *rūpa* (etc.), or is the locus of *rūpa* (etc.).

This explanation has been given by Kamalaśīla in reply to a claim made by

Uddyotakara to the effect that the Tathāgata's negation of *ātman* in relation to the *skandhas* cannot be established as meaningful if the negation of the self is considered to be an overall one according to *sāmānyapratiṣedha*, and that it is therefore a *viśeṣapratiṣedha* which implies the affirmation of the self in another respect. And Kamalaśīla concludes by characterizing the negative statements in question in the canon as 'recitative' mentions (*anūdya*) rather than as 'operative' affirmations (*vidhi*) of something else.[143]

It is interesting to find here that the old Mīmāṃṣā and grammatical concept of *anuvāda* as distinct from *vidhi* has thus been linked with the distinction between *sāmānyapratiṣedha* and *viśeṣapratiṣedha*. This last distinction is in its turn parallel to that between the absolute *prasajyapratiṣedha* and the relative *paryudāsapratiṣedha* referred to elsewhere in this paper. Perhaps the distinction between *anuvāda* and *vidhi* can best be explained in terms of a comprehensive theory of speech acts; whereas the distinction between *prasajya* and *paryudāsa* negation, and that between *sāmānyapratiṣedha* and *viśeṣapratiṣedha*, is essentially a logical and semantic difference.

In concluding it is to be noted that the concept of the indeterminate is not identical with that of inexpressibility discussed elsewhere in this paper: the use of the term *avaktavya* or *avācya* evidently presupposed the existence of some entity, however hard to define, whereas the term *anabhilāpya* relates to absence of own being (*niḥsvabhāvatā*), non-substantiality (*nairātmya*) and emptiness (*śūnyatā*).[144]

Appendix I. Commentarial interpretations of *Mulamadhyamakakārikā* 18.8

The **Akutobhayā* describes the four positions in the Buddha's teaching mentioned in *MMK* 18.8 as successive graded stages (*rim pa* = *krama*) that have been utilized by the Teacher so that sentient beings may attain their aim progressively. These stages have been taught by the Buddha in accordance with his disciples' mental faculties, propensities (*bsam pa* = *āśaya*), inclinations (*bag la ñal* = *anuśaya*), temporal circumstances, etc.[145]

For his part Buddhapālita has not, in his interpretation of this passage, laid emphasis on any special force to be assigned to the prefix *anu-* in *anuśāsana*; but he states that what Nāgārjuna refers to in this verse has its source in worldly distinctions.[146] Thus, the Buddha has allowed that what is held in the world to be *tathya* is true (I), and what is held in the world to be not *tathya* is not true (II). The same principle of accommodation to worldly consensual usage holds also in the case of the conjunction of both which is represented in the third position (III): what is held in the world to be both *tathya* and not *tathya* the Buddha has allowed to be true and not true. That is, although the Buddha has realized that all things (*bhāva*) are empty of own being, by virtue of worldly transactional convention (*lokavyavahāra*) they have nevertheless been treated as 'true' in some respect. As for the bi-negation of both positions (IV), it holds good for all

bhāvas in the absolute sense (*paramārtha*); for while empty of own being (i.e. not 'true') they are still as real as an illusory projection (*māyā*), a dream, a mirage, a reflection, an echo, etc. (i.e. not altogether 'untrue' hallucinations).[147] Buddhapālita mentions next the following alternative interpretation of these four positions. Some persons hold that 'all' (*sarva*) are produced from an existent (*yod pa* = *sat*, i.e. according to the *satkāryavāda* e.g. of the Sāṃkhya) (I), others hold that 'all' are produced from causes in which the result is not yet existent (*rgyu la 'bras bu sṅa na med pa dag las*, i.e. according to the *ārambhavāda* of the Nyāya) (II), and still others hold that 'all' are produced from the existent-cum-non-existent (III). But the Buddha-Bhagavats themselves have taught that all *bhāvas*, which are nothing but designations founded on causes and conditions in interdependence, neither exist nor do they not exist (*dṅos po rgyu daṅ rkyen las gdags par zad kyi yod pa daṅ med pa ni ma yin te*) (IV). Consequently the Buddha-Bhagavats have said this and that by accommodation to worldly transactional convention; but persons wishing to see reality as it is must not attach themselves conceptually (*abhiniviś-*) to what has been said in accordance with any worldly convention, and they must rather apprehend the real (*de kho na* = *tattva*).[148]

While this second interpretation does not perhaps presuppose a series of progressively more 'correct' positions, in the first explanation position IV is clearly the most 'correct' inasmuch as it is the closest approximation to reality, so that one can even in this interpretation speak of successive graded positions the last of which approximates best, within the limits of discursive linguistic usage, to reality.

Bhāvaviveka in his interpretation of the verse also does not lay emphasis on any special force of the prefix *anu-*. But when he comes to the conjunction of *tathya* and not *tathya* (III), he states (like the author of the **Akutobhayā*)[149] that it is dependent on the two truth-levels (*satyadvaya*). As for bi-negation (IV), according to Bhāvaviveka it refers to the fact that during meditative intuition (*mṅon par rtogs pa* = *abhisamaya*) the Yogin does not engage in dichotomizing conceptualization concerning the reality (*tattva*) of all *dharmas*.[150]

In an alternative explanation he gives next (also in agreement with the **Akutobhayā*), Bhāvaviveka points out that, from one point of view, one may speak of *tathya* (I) but from another of not *tathya* (II). The conjunction of the two (III) is dependent on the difference between worldly transactional convention and the convention established in the philosophical treatises (*śāstravyavahāra*). And since, in Mahāyāna thought, all *dharmas* are unborn, any analytic view (*rnam par brtag pa: vicāra*) that takes them as *tathya* and so forth in virtue of some supposed *bhāva* within the domain of either *savikalpaka* or *nirvikalpaka* cognition does not really exist as such. For this reason, then, their bi-negation has been stated (IV).[151]

In other words, we have here not some indeterminate, irrational or mysterious entity that is (or appears as) simultaneously *tathya* and not *tathya* (III), or neither (IV), but rather reality to which an approximation has been made by the various

schools of thought by means of certain discursively expressible positions, such as holding it to be *tathya*, not *tathya*, both, and finally neither. This approximation to reality is sometimes (but evidently not always) regarded as progressive and graded; and when it is so regarded, position IV may be considered closer to reality than position III. The commentaries quoted above do not, therefore, present reality as being in itself some *coincidentia oppositorum* (though they do indeed support a kind of *docta ignorantia* in the *āryatūṣṇīmbhāva*): conjunction (III) derives from the juxtaposition of either *lokavyavahāra* and *śāstravyavahāra* or *saṃvṛti* and *paramārthasatya*.

It is to be noted that Bhāvaviveka's explanation generally agrees with the **Akutobhayā*, although he does not explicitly refer to successive stages as does this commentary.

For Candrakīrti's interpretation, see above (pp. 6–7).

While the preceding explanations tend to regard the four positions as approximations, the fourth being sometimes considered as the best, a section of the *Ta chih tu lun* (**Mahāprajñāpāramitā-Upadeśa*) has quoted *MMK* 18.8 in reply to the question: "If all views are false what is the absolute point of view?[152]

Appendix II. Some modern interpretations of the *catuṣkoṭi*

1. Logical aspects

Over the last two decades in particular the logical structure of the *catuṣkoṭi* has been the subject of a considerable amount of discussion and controversy, and also of some speculation in the context of what is sometimes called 'East-West' philosophical comparison. In the following pages some points in the principal attempts at an explication of its structure are briefly reviewed.

Since the early 1930s (Schayer 1933, 93) the *catuṣkoṭi* has come to be referred to as the tetralemma, each *koṭi* being regarded as a proposition. And the *catuṣkoṭi* as a whole has been termed a 'quadruple proposition' (Robinson 1969, 76).

An impetus for much of the discussion that has taken place during the last two decades in the English-speaking world at least seems to have been supplied by P. T. Raju's essay entitled 'The Principle of Four-Cornered Negation in Indian Philosophy' (1953). Raju there reviewed briefly the fourfold schema as used in Indian thought at a time just previous to the rise of Buddhism (Sañjaya, and the 'sophists' or *amarāvikkhepikas*) and during the earlier period of the development of Buddhism (*vitaṇḍāvādins* in the Nyāya literature), as well as its use by Nāgārjuna and Śaṃkara. He singled out the concept of the modal relativity of truth and knowledge (*nayavāda, syādvāda*) in Jaina thought and showed how, in the seven-fold conditional predication (*saptab haṅgāi*) employed by this school, a subject in addition to being (1) existent and (2) non-existent may also be (3) both existent and non-existent, (4) simply indescribable (*avaktavya*), and (5–7) both indescribable and either P, not P, or both P and not P. Raju pointed out further that for the Jaina these seven *nayas* or 'tropes' are non-exclusive

alternatives rather than exclusive disjunctives.[153] With respect to the Śūnyavāda of the Mādhyamika, Raju noted that the word *śūnya* 'empty' also denotes the zero in Indian mathematics, and that zero is mathematically an indeterminate number since it is neither positive nor negative.[154] Concerning the logical problem posed by the fourth *koṭi*, Raju suggested that "it can be explained with the help of the difference between contrary and contradictory opposition of western logic. Two contraries can both be negated, but not the contradictories" (710). And after pointing out that Sanskrit did not have separate terms to express the difference between a contrary and a contradictory (710)[155] he added:

> We may say that if the principle of double negation is applicable to an opposition, it is contradictory; otherwise, contrary. In the case of propositions with quantified subjects, it is easy for us to determine which is a contrary and which a contradictory negation. But in the others it is extremely difficult (711).

Raju concluded that

> double negation is not necessarily the original affirmation. . . . The followers of Sankara, like Nāgārjuna, did not accept the principle of double negation (712).[156]

At about the same time C. T. K. Chari brought into the discussion of the *catuṣkoṭi* the question of a logic of mysticism (cf. R. Otto) along with that of the applicability in this context of multi-valued logics, Brouwerian logic as distinct from 'classical Boolean logic', and (following H. Reichenbach) the principles of uncertainty and complementarity as evolved in quantum physics. He observed:

> The function of Brouwer's logic and Reichenbach's logic is to introduce into mathematics and mathematical physics, respectively, a domain of 'restricted assertability'. . . . This is just what mystical dialectic proposes to do in the much larger field of human thinking (1954, 323).[157]

Later A. Bahm took up the discussion again, but since he confined himself to the Jaina *syādvāda* we need only note that he also held that 'non-*a*' is the contrary rather than the contradictory of '*a*' (1957, 128). This view was accepted by K. N. Jayatilleke (1963, 337) and others and has come to be a cornerstone of their interpretations of the problem of the *catuṣkoṭi*.

In 1958 H. Nakamura published an English version of a study that first appeared in 1954 in Japanese dealing with the formalization of Buddhist logic by means of symbolic logic, in this case Boolean algebra. Nakamura acknowledged that Nāgārjuna used in his arguments the laws of contradiction and excluded middle but contended that his "arguments clearly show errors from the

standpoint of olden time Western traditional logic" (1958, 9). Nakamura suggested that "when viewed from the standpoint of the two-valued logical algebra of Schröder, there are occasions when they are not fallacies and become true arguments" (9). For example, in *MMK* 13.7

> *yady aśūnyaṃ bhavet kiṃcit syāc chūnyam iti kiṃcana /*
> *na kiṃcid asty aśūnyaṃ ca kutaḥ śūnyaṃ bhaviṣyati //*[158]

which he regards as a hypothetical judgement, Nakamura finds the fallacy of the denial of the consequent based on the negation of the antecedent, which would constitute an infringement of the law of conversion by contraposition (8–9).[159] Nakamura nevertheless suggests a reformulation in terms of Schröder's logical algebra and holds that

> although the first sentence by Nāgārjuna may be wrong, when expressed with the figures of symbolic logic which designate classes, there is no fallacy with regard to conversion by contraposition; i.e. the conclusion entails no fallacy of contradicting to the first sentence set forth by Nāgārjuna. The fact that the above-mentioned logistical formation as such is fallacious proves that the doctrine of voidness as such held by ancient Buddhists has something that can not be explained away by the method of symbolic logic alone (10).[160]

As for the *catuṣkoṭi*, it should be noted that Nakamura treats the four *koṭis* as conjunctive in his formalization $a + (-a) + [a(-a)] + [-a(-a)]$ and speaks of a logic of four alternative propositions (12). Finally, noting that *śūnya* has the same meaning as 0 in logical algebra, he concludes: "It must be permitted after all to indicate Voidness by '0' ", for in two-valued logic "all that does not exist is expressed by '0' and is called the 'null class', indicating something that cannot exist and expressing falsehood" (14–15).[161]

In 1957 R. H. Robinson took up the subject in a paper entitled 'Some logical aspects of Nāgārjuna's system' in which he gave a brief survey of earlier opinions. He there discussed Nakamura's suggestions as set out in his original article of 1954, from which he acknowledged having drawn some of his material despite certain differences (1957, 295). Very significantly, Robinson stressed that his article was to consider only the formal structure of Nāgārjuna's argumentation, excluding epistemology, psychology and ontology (295). First Robinson showed that Nāgārjuna recognized and used the principles of non-contradiction and excluded middle, as well as the law of identity (295–6). Then he went on to claim that Nāgārjuna's principal form of inference is the hypothetical syllogism. And from the fact that in, for example, *MMK* 19.6

> *bhāvaṃ pratītya kālaś cet kālo bhāvād ṛte kutaḥ /*
> *na ca kaścana bhāvo 'sti kutaḥ kālo bhaviṣyati //*[162]

Nāgārjuna virtually states the rule of denying the consequent, Robinson deduces that he "was aware to some degree of the principle of conversion" (296). But, citing as examples *MMK* 13.7 (quoted above) and also 7.17 and 10.7, Robinson goes on to argue that by negating the antecedent Nāgārjuna violated the law of conversion (297).[163] Next Robinson takes up Nakamura's suggestion that these examples would be valid in terms of the logical algebra of Schröder but finds that transcribing them in this manner does not remove the logical difficulties (298).

With regard to the *catuṣkoṭi*, Robinson considers that its four members are in a relation of exclusive disjunction (301), and that taken together they are supposed to be exhaustive (302). Robinson then maintains that while the first two alternative propositions are to be quantified universally ('All *x* is *A*'; 'All *x* is not *A*') the third is to be quantified as 'Some *x* is *A* and some *x* is not *A*'; in the fourth alternative *x* is null ('No *x* is *A* and no *x* is not *A*') (302). Robinson points out that, given Schayer's transcription (~*p*.~(~*p*): 1933, 93) for the fourth alternative, 'not-*p* and not-not-*p*' implies that the four alternatives are propositional functions.

> However, it is apparent that negations and conjunctions of the basic proposition do not transcribe [*MMK* 25.15–18], and, if the terms of the other examples are quantified in the same way, do not transcribe them. 'Not-*p*' is the contradictory of '*p*', but 'some *x* is *A*' is not the contradictory of 'some *x* is not *A*' (302).

Concerning Nakamura's (1954) interpretation of the *catuṣkoṭi* in algebraic notation, Robinson observes that the third ('*a*–*a*') and fourth ('–(*a*–*a*)') alternatives would be redundant and senseless; "however, if the subject is not totally distributed in either conjunct in the third alternative, then this form need no longer be considered redundant" (302–3); and it is noted that Stcherbatsky's translation in *Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* (p. 90) in fact implicitly quantified the third alternative (303 note). The third and fourth *koṭi*s then "are not simple propositions, but conjunctions" of the Aristotelian I and 0 and E and A forms (in Boole–Schröder notation respectively $ab \neq 0 . a\bar{b} \neq 0$ and $ab = 0 a\bar{b} = 0$)(303).[164] Robinson concludes that "Nāgārjuna's reason for negating each of the alternatives is that its terms are null, as defined by his opponents" (303). The way of escape from the consequences of the dilemmas pointed out by Nāgārjuna is to

> 'take them by the horns', to repudiate the definitions which they presuppose. In so doing, one rejects the whole set of propositions which Nāgārjuna calls 'views' (*dṛṣṭi*), and arrives at the meaning of emptiness (304).

Finally, concerning Nakamura's definition of 'voidness' as being itself the null class, Robinson proposes a correction when he observes that in a

fundamental verse (*MMK* 24.14) " 'everything' means 'all mundane and trans-mundane dharmas' " (305); accordingly,

> the entire point of Nāgārjuna's argument is that the class of entities that possess own-being is null. Thus the class of empty phenomena, *pratītya-samutpāda*, is the complement of the own-being, or null, class. The 'emptiness' class has 'designations' as members, and some designations are cogent. Thus the emptiness class is not null, but is co-extensive with the universal class (306).
>
> The Śūnyavāda is in fact a kind of theory of fictions. The concept of designation (*prajñapti*) provides a way of handling abstracts without concretizing them, or assigning ontological value to them (307–8).

In a supplement dealing with Sêng-chao, the Chinese San-lun master who lived from 374 to 414, Robinson suggests that several passages in the *Chao-lun* support the supposition that its author "understood the tetralemma as involving quantification" (1958, 114), and that he thus had some knowledge of the logic of classes (119). Sêng-chao employed the lemmas as "heuristic designations", but unlike Nāgārjuna he may not have been aware of the rules of non-contradiction and of the excluded middle (119). Indeed, Sêng-chao seems to have held that the fourth lemma is "speech about Absolute Truth" (115).[165] In this article Robinson interprets the fourth *koṭi* as 'All *x* is *A* and all *x* is non-*A*' (113); though this formulation differs from his formulation of 1957 ('No *x* is *A* and no *x* is not *A*'), he remarked in a later publication that 'No *x* is not *A*' equals 'All *x* is *A*' (1967, 57).[166]

The early history of the *catuṣkoṭi* was studied, mainly on the basis of materials drawn from the Pāli Nikāyas and their commentaries and from Jaina sources, in the course of a large work entitled *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* by K. N. Jayatilleke (1963). In this book the author developed ideas he had already outlined in an article of 1950 entitled 'Some Problems of Translation and Interpretation II'.[167]

Jayatilleke objected to calling the *catuṣkoṭi* a tetralemma; and regarding the *koṭis* as propositional functions he usually referred to them as four alternatives; indeed, since he considered them as basic to an entire system of logic, he proposed the appelation of fourfold logic of the four alternatives (1963, 350). He also objected to Robinson's statement that the *catuṣkoṭi* resembles the four Aristotelian forms, adding that Robinson's proposal to interpret the fourth alternative as 'No *x* is *A* and no *x* is not *A*', which is true 'when *x* is null', is contradicted by usage in the Pāli Nikāyas (351). Jayatilleke maintained in addition that in the case of

> a ṭhapanīya pañha or meaningless question all four alternatives were *rejected* rather than *negated* because the question in each of the

> alternatives was not considered to be a proper question (*kallo pañho*). . . . The replies to each of these questions is of the form 'mā h'evaṃ', i.e. do not say so (A. II.161).

Rather than 'four-cornered negation' (Raju) this should, therefore, properly be called 'four-cornered rejection' (346).

Jayatilleke returned to the 'Logic of the Four Alternatives' a last time in 1967 when he discussed once again the significance of these alternatives in the Nikāyas and ventured the observation that the problem has baffled not only modern scholars but also Nāgārjuna himself (1967, 69). Given his opinion that "Nāgārjuna and some of his commentators, ancient and modern, refer to this logic with little understanding of its real nature and significance" and that "there is little evidence that Nāgārjuna understood the logic of the four alternatives as formulated and utilized in early Buddhism" (82), his article cannot be expected to contribute much to an understanding of the Madhyamaka school.[168] Suffice it then to note that, according to Jayatilleke, the four alternatives are mutually exclusive and together exhaustive (70). While in some examples all four alternatives are rejected, sometimes in the Nikāyas if one of the four alternatives is true then the others are false; but it is historically incorrect to say (with Robinson) that Gautama has negated each of the alternatives (70–1). In particular, Jayatilleke criticized Robinson's interpretation of the third lemma as a conjunction of the Aristotelian I and O forms and of the fourth as a conjunction of the contraries of the conjuncts of the third. lemma, and he concluded: "It can be shown that if Robinson's analysis is correct, the alternatives are not mutually exclusive or together exhaustive, contradicting his claim . . ." (74). "But the difficulty is with the fourth lemma, since E and A, being contraries, cannot both be true" (75). In Jayatilleke's view

> the second alternative is to be taken as the contrary of the first. We designate this by non *P* instead of not-*P*[169]. . . . It is evident that the third alternative is not a conjunction of the first two alternatives or of the contradictories of the first two alternatives (on the analogy of the quantified propositions). . . . When the statement 'the universe is both finite and infinite' is made, it is explained as 'the universe is finite in one dimension and infinite in another.' In general, the third alternative is, therefore, of the form: '*S* is *partly P* and *partly* non-*P*'. (78–9)

As for the fourth *koṭi*,

> since the second alternative is the contrary and not the contradictory of *P* and the third asserts that the subject has a combination of some of the contrary characteristics, there is left a part of the determinable constituting the universe of discourse which is referred to by the fourth alternative (80).

For example,

> happiness (*sukha*) . . . is a determinate quality characterizing a person's *hedonic tone* (*vedanā*). When we remove the qualities of 'happiness', 'unhappiness' (*dukkha*), or a mixture of the two, we are left with 'neutral hedonic tone' (*adukkha-m-asukha vedanā*). So a person who is 'neither happy nor unhappy' comprises the class of people experiencing a neutral hedonic tone. Such a class need not necessarily be a null class, although it could be so sometimes (80).[170]

Jayatilleke observes finally that it would

> be self-contradictory to negate all the alternatives. The apparent instances in which this is done in early Buddhism are those in which, for some reason or other, each of the alternatives is misleading, being based on false assumptions, and therefore is to be rejected. This rejection is not the same as negation. (81)[171]

In 1969 Robinson published a review of Jayatilleke's *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* in which he also refers to his article of 1967 just summarized. Amongst other points he takes up Jayatilleke's interpretation of the fourth alternative as referring to a neutral position in a series of non-contradictory predicates and points out some flaws in it. Moreover, the examples of the *catuṣkoṭi* in the Nikāyas are not homogeneous (75), and in the third *koṭi* the subject is undistributed (76). Already earlier Robinson had maintained that the four lemmas are not modes of a single proposition ('either *p*, or not-*p*, or *p*-and-not-*p*, or not-*p*-and-not-not-*p*'), and that since they differ in the quantity of their constituent terms they are four propositions with different internal structures ('All *x* is *A*'; 'No *x* is *A*'; 'Some *x* is *A*, and some *x* is not *A*'; 'No *x* is *A*, and no *x* is not *A*') (1967, 57).

In 1969 (76–78) Robinson, searching for the widest ground of agreement with Jayatilleke, concluded in eirenic vein by enumerating a number of points on the *catuṣkoṭi* as used in the Nikāyas. The third *koṭi* is a conjunction of contraries, so that there is no violation of the rule of contradiction. The fourth *koṭi* is

> meaningful when *X* exists and when *Y* and non-*Y* are contraries rather than contradictories. The non-existence of *X* may have been sufficient reason for rejecting the fourth lemma, though this one, like the first three, was evidently rejected wherever the Buddhist took exception to the questioner's or listener's *concept* of *X*. This . . . is Nāgārjuna's position. As he considers own-being (*svabhāva*) to be a self-contradictory concept, any proposition containing a term to which own-being is ascribed is to be denied.
>
> Each of the four alternatives is intended to exclude the other three

and

> the four lemmas were intended to be jointly exhaustive.
>
> The predicates of the first two *koṭis* are sometimes contradictories ('finite or infinite in all respects'), sometimes contraries ('east or west'), and sometimes just phrases containing opposites ('torments himself, or torments another').
>
> The *catuṣkoṭi*, like other Buddhist dialectic, assumes a two-value logic. No truth-values other than true and false are countenanced either in Early Buddhism or in Nāgārjuna. As the silence of the *āryas* is non-propositional, it is out of order to consider inexpressibility as a true-value.

Finally, in a posthumously published paper dealing with the *avyākṛtavastus*, Robinson has noted that, for the early Buddhists, the fourth lemma seems to have meant equivocation;

> the rejection of this lemma, together with the explicit statements attributed to Gotama and his disciples to the effect that he knew what was to be known, should dispel the view that Gotama refused to assert the unexplained points because he was agnostic about them (1972, 318–9).

As already seen above, the distinction between *prasajya* and *paryudāsa* negation is of importance for the problem of the *catuṣkoṭi*.[172] B. K. Matilal has claimed that when interpreted in terms of exclusion negation – i.e. the *prasajya* kind – "the apparent contradiction of the joint negation of the four-fold alternatives will disappear" (1971, 164).[173] In this form of negation as used by the Mādhyamika, "denial of a position does not necessarily involve commitment to any other position" (164). While the last point is of fundamental importance, the suggestion that in *prasajya* negation contradiction will disappear overlooks the fact that the Madhyamaka method works precisely because positions I and II and the terms of positions III and IV are contradictorily opposed. The Mādhyamika is certainly not working towards some ontological or logical third value between contradictories any more than he is seeking a dialectical synthesis. Indeed, if there really existed such a dialectical synthesis or third value, there would be something on which conceptual thinking could base itself and cling, and the entire purpose of the Madhyamaka method could then no longer be achieved. In other words, contradiction must not disappear; and all the four *koṭis* are to be negated or rejected (see below, pp. 48–9, 51, 54–5).

In an article on the relationship between religion and logic, S. Ichimura has discussed the logical interpretations of the *catuṣkoṭi* proposed by several scholars, and he has accepted for early Buddhism Jayatilleke's analysis of the *koṭis* as

propositional and disjunctive, the third and fourth assertions being respectively not a conjunction of the first and second and not their bi-negation (1973, 44). But Jayatilleke's demonstration is not final, and it is not exhaustive since it did not touch on the Mahāyāna (45). As for Nāgārjuna, his method is intended to reveal the limitations of logic and language, and the principle of the negative application of the *catuṣkoṭi* "derives from the conceptual scheme which consists of the four dyadic propositions such that their totality leads to contradiction and hence to total annihilation, i.e. the breakdown of symbolism" (47–8). The negative use of the *catuṣkoṭi* was then developed for a religious reason, to transcend the limits of our logical and linguistic conventions (50), demonstrating the self-contradictory nature of the referential object of a proposition (51).[174]

Taking up a theme he had broached already in 1962 in an article entitled Negation and the Law of Contradiction in Indian Thought', F. Staal has on two subsequent occasions considered the question of the *catuṣkoṭi*. While in the earlier discussion, an appendix to a study on analyticity, he has merely offered a formalization of *MMK* 1.1 together with a brief account of three varieties of negation (1966, 90–92), in his most recent work Staal has devoted a chapter to the *catuṣkoṭi* in the context of a discussion on whether 'Oriental mysticism' and the Madhyamaka are to be regarded as rational or irrational (1975, 32–46).

Staal notes that the type of negation used by the Mādhyamika is the *prasajya* kind. But contrary to Matilal he considers that this by no means disposes of the fact that contradictions arise between *prasajya* negations, for "the principle of noncontradiction applies only to such negations" (Staal 1975, 38). And he concludes that Raju's, Robinson's and Matilal's "logical attempts to save the *catuṣkoṭi* from inconsistency are . . . unsatisfactory" (38). Nevertheless, "a sensible interpretation offered by Robinson, following Candrakīrti . . ., would be to regard the *catuṣkoṭi* not as a statement, but as a pedagogical or therapeutic device" (40). Staal also describes Nāgārjuna's statement that all is *tathya*, not *tathya*, both and neither (*MMK* 18.8) as "the central teaching of the Buddha" (36), although this is anything but certain in the context of what Nāgārjuna has written.[175]

Staal however acknowledges that the Mādhyamikas have not in fact thrown overboard the principle of non-contradiction, and in so doing he has gone a long way towards dispelling the nonsense so often talked about a so-called 'Buddhist irrationalism'. Yet he still thinks that the Mādhyamikas "do in fact reject the principle of the excluded middle" (39). He explains:

> If we reject the fourth clause [of the *catuṣkoṭi*], as the Mādhyamika philosophers did, we are free to accept the principle of excluded middle. But we don't have to, since denying the denial of the excluded middle only implies the excluded middle if we accept the principle of double negation, which is itself equivalent to the excluded middle (39).

Staal then concludes:

> When the Mādhyamika philosopher negates a proposition, it does not follow that he himself accepts the negation of that proposition. Accordingly, there are other alternatives than *A* and not-*A*, and the principle of the excluded middle does not hold (44).

In this connexion Staal has introduced the question of intuitionistic logic and he writes:

> According to Brouwer, when we are dealing with sets of infinitely many objects, we may not be in a position to determine whether *A* or not-*A* is valid. Hence in this logic there are more than two values (39).

Staal's interpretation is then tantamount to affirming that, for the Mādhyamikas, there exists some third position or value between the affirmation and the negation of a predicate (or proposition).

Now, that this was not the opinion of the Madhyamaka school *as a whole* is eloquently shown by Śāntideva's statement (*Bodhicaryāvatāra* 9.35):

> *yadā na bhāvo nâbhāvo mateḥ saṃtiṣṭhate puraḥ /*
> *tadânyagatyabhāvena nirālambā praśāmyati //*
> When neither existence nor non-existence presents itself before the mind, then, being without a support because of the absence of any other recourse, [the mind] is still.

Staal does not refer to this very important statement at all in his chapter on the *catuṣkoṭi* and 'Buddhist irrationalism'; and when he quotes it much later in quite another context (160) he does not draw the conclusion that, for this important Mādhyamika master at least, the principle of the excluded third is not only valid but altogether fundamental in the philosophical thought of his school.[176]

Nāgārjuna has not, it is true, expressed himself quite so clearly on the matter in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* or *Vigrahavyāvartanī*; and his statements in *MMK* 7.30 and 8.7, quoted by Staal (34), have to do rather with non-contradiction. But in *MMK* 2.8 and 15 as well as in 21.14 Nāgārjuna seems to have recognized the principle clearly enough; Candrakīrti has also stated the principle of the exclusion of the third in his *Prasannapadā* (e.g. 23.14; cf. Seyfort Ruegg 1969, 384–5). That the principle involved in the *tertium non datur* is indeed fundamental in Mādhyamika thought follows from the consideration that, if a third position or value really existed, the mind could cling to it as some kind of thing, albeit one beyond the two values of 'classical' logic. But if this were to happen there could be no 'stillness' or tranquillity' on the level of the *paramārtha*, i.e. no absence of *vikalpa* and *prapañca*. And this would be radically opposed to Madhyamaka theory.

Staal next considers the problem of the use of paradox, which is especially frequent when the Mahāyāna literature treats of absolute reality. About Nāgārjuna's statement in the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (29) "But I have no proposition" (*nâsti ca mama pratijñā*), Staal writes: "Unless this statement itself is not a proposition, we have a paradox here" (45). However, this interpretation assimilates two distinct uses of the term 'proposition'; and it would hold good only if *pratijñā* meant here any sentence or statement ('*nâsti ca mama pratijñā*' being of course indubitably a sentence). But this sentence is not a *pratijñā* in Nāgārjuna's sense; for in his usage *pratijñā* denotes an assertion and more specifically a thesis (e.g. of an inference or syllogism) which seeks to establish something.[177] What Nāgārjuna is saying here, then, is surely not that he is not uttering a meaningful sentence (something that would be not merely paradoxical[178] but quite absurd), but rather that he is not propounding a proposition claiming probative force concerning the (positive or even negative) own being (*svabhāva*) of any thing. Whatever other logical problems may arise in connexion with Nāgārjuna's procedure in this respect, there would appear to be no paradox here at all.

To return to the exclusion of the middle, as an onto-logical principle it is therefore one of the very foundations of Madhyamaka thought. And if the logical principle of excluded middle (understood as meaning that one of a set of two contradictory sentences must be true according to the principle of bivalence) is not accepted in the Mādhyamika's procedure based on the use of the *prasaṅga*, this is because he considers that the subject of such sentences is in fact null; hence, to use modern terminology, such a proposition is not semantically well-formed. But from this it is not possible to argue that the Mādhyamika does not recognize the principle as valid: he simply does not find that the thing in question can be the subject of a qualification in any appropriate and meaningful way (as Staal himself has indeed correctly noted [45] following Schayer 1931, xxvi).[179]

In the light of the foregoing, it turns out that the cases Staal has considered problematic (though not as signs of irrationalism) and as possibly indicating non-acceptance of the principle of the excluded middle do not require such an interpretation. This of course only strengthens his general thesis that an irrationalist interpretation of Nāgārjuna and the Madhyamaka is quite unfounded. At the same time, it should make us extremely wary of injecting into the thought of the Madhyamaka school the modern concepts of multi-valued logic. There is no evidence that the main stream of this school admitted a third position as valid either logically or ontologically; and an analysis of the use of the negation of position IV of the *catuṣkoṭi* certainly does not support such an idea. Nāgārjuna's use referred to above of what amounts to a two-valued logic is consonant with the Mahāyānist theory of alternatives in a (binary or quaternary) conceptual system (*vikalpa*), where the affirmation or negation of one member of a dichotomously structured pair involves the negation of the other member. And there appears to be no doubt that Nāgārjuna and his successors in the Madhyamaka school founded many of their analyses of concepts and entities and their argu-

ments based on reasoning by undesired consequences (*prasaṅga*) on the twin principles of non-contradiction and the excluded middle, before going on to show that in fact none of the members of a conceptual pair or tetralemma can in fact apply in reality.

Now a three-valued logic may be based on the nonfulfilment of referential presuppositions;[180] and in this case an aspect of three-valued logic could indeed have a certain bearing on Nāgārjuna's philosophy. For him, any and all presuppositions according to which propositions are constructed concerning the (positive or even negative) own being (*svabhāva*) of a thing are necessarily unfulfilled because all *dharma*s are really empty of own being (*svabhāvaśūnya*) and non-substantial (*niḥsvabhāva*). Production or existence through own being of any thing of which some property could properly be predicated thus clearly constitutes an unfulfilled condition in the Madhyamaka. Consequently, a thing may be said, following Mahāyānist theory, to be *like* a magical projection (*māyā*) (not in a nihilistic sense but in the sense that it is imagined to be otherwise than it is in its true nature of dependent origination and emptiness); and it is just in this way that things may be regarded as indeterminate or indefinite in the Mahāyāna. But it has to be observed at the same time that in no circumstances are *dharma*s ever anything but ontologically and logically undetermined in the sense just described; for never are they real entities (*bhāva*) of which some property could (eventually) be predicated. No *bhāva* can therefore ultimately have the truth-value 'true'/'false'.

When the Mādhyamika describes a *dharma* as being like a flower in the sky (*khapuṣpa*), the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāputra*), etc., he is thus evidently operating with a notion comparable with that of non-referentiality according to which the relevant presuppositions are unfulfilled. But it appears that his system is not otherwise strictly based on a three-valued logic in which the concept of falseness may be divided into (a) 'false' and (b) 'indeterminate', and in which a predicate may possess a third and neutral area in addition to 'true' and 'false'.

If, as has been suggested by U. Blau in his work on three-valued linguistic analysis and logic, informal thinking is best reconstructed within the frame of three-valued logic, it is possible that such a logic might have left traces in Nāgārjuna's writings since his language could no doubt be described as 'ordinary' language. But at the same time it has to be recalled that the logical method used by Nāgārjuna is firmly based on a 'classical' two-valued logic founded on the dichotomously structured binary nature of discursive thinking in terms of alternatives (*vikalpa*); for only in this way can the concepts of discursive thinking, and along with them the categories of language, be shown to be self-cancelling and 'zeroed'. This point, which has been made by Śāntideva in his *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (9.35 quoted above, p. 49), emerges also from Nāgārjuna's analytic procedure.

To sum up, the logical investigations to which the *catuṣkoṭi* and related concepts have been submitted have no doubt succeeded in demonstrating that the

principles of non-contradiction and of excluded middle have been recognized by the Mādhyamika thinkers, and that their reasoning (*yukti*) in particular is in fact based on them. (There also seems now to be reason to think that the principle of double negation was also understood by them.[181]) Concerning the structure and functions of the *catuṣkoṭi*, however, while a great deal of ingenuity has been expended in these discussions with a view to clarifying its logical background, the applications of this set of four positions in Buddhist thought have perhaps received short shrift or been sometimes obscured in the dust of argument between the proponents of variant interpretations. In fact, much of the discussion was admittedly conducted mainly with a view to establishing the logical structure of the *catuṣkoṭi* and its parts to the exclusion of its other philosophical aspects (cf. Robinson 1957, 295). It has also been made a stock topic for a certain style of 'East-West philosophy' and for what Jayatilleke referred to as a typical 'East-West problem' (1967, 69 and 82). A problematic has thus tended to be imposed on Buddhist thought in a form that does not in fact seem to be essential to the questions with which the Buddhist thinkers were actually concerned. It would seem obvious that such prejudgement in terms of another problematic imported from elsewhere is a rather ethnocentric procedure inasmuch as it is determined, not by the system of thought being studied, but by the modern analyst's culture and presuppositions. Hermeneutically it may be that such a tendency is difficult to avoid, but the difficulties require to be noted and taken careful account of. With regard to Nāgārjuna in particular, one basic source of misunderstanding has probably been the inclination of many writers to regard him first and foremost as a dialectician.[182]

Another example of the importing of a logical problem from outside will be briefly considered in Appendix III.

2. The semiotic aspect

Beside the essentially logical approaches reviewed above, the second half of the 1960s saw the beginnings of an application of semiotics to the study of the Śūnyavāda and the *catuṣkoṭi*.

In the course of an interpretation of the Śūnyavāda as a 'zero way' or 'zerology', L. Mäll (1965, 190) proposed analysing the *catuṣkoṭi* as a conjunction $A_1 = A + (-A) + [A + (-A)] + \{- [A + (-A)]\}$. In a subsequent article (Kull and Mäll 1967, 63) the tetralemma was presented, with a slightly different interpretation, both as disjunction and as conjunction.

Mäll has defined 'zerology' as involving a lifting of the opposition between an affirmative and a negative judgement (between + and –), which means that relations are considered as indefinite (1968, 58–9). Thus, on the highest level of *prajñā*, as opposed to that of *vijñāna*, no logically determined relations would exist between concepts. While the *vijñāna* level corresponds to logical thought, the *prajñā* level would represent a variety of thought that is 'post-logical' – or a different logic which can be marked by the formula $A \subset\!\supset B$[183] (1968, 61–2; cf.

1965, 191). Mäll adduces statements drawn from the Prajñā-pāramitā literature which he interprets as: A is A because it is $\bar{A}$ (1968, 62).

Mäll does not regard what he terms Oriental pragmatics as directly reducible to Occidental schemata, and he questions the substitution of modern philosophical and psychological terminology for Buddhist terminology. This is, however, not to deny the existence of parallels between the two; but in many domains of culture the Orient has attained altogether exceptional results (1968, 55).

Following the approach to the Śūnyavāda outlined by Mäll, J. Kristeva has considered the 'zero way' or 'zerology' in the frame of her semiotic theory of paragrammatism. In one place she has in fact formalized paragrammatic practice by means of a conjunctive tetralemma: $\pi = D + (-D) + [D + (-D)] + \{-[D+(-D)]\} = 0$ (where π is the paragrammatic sequence and D a denotatum) or, in mathematical notation, as $A \subset\supset B$ (i.e. a non-synthetic union of sometimes contradictory formulae) (1969, 197 and 253). Elsewhere she has used the formula $A = B + (-B)+[B+(-B)]+\{-[B+(-B)]\} = 0$ to resume the two sides of the twofold truth which then neutralize each other (1969, 85). In her general theory of semiotics Kristeva has assimilated the kind of negation found in the language of poetry with an annihilative type of negation that has nothing to do with the negation found in a proposition of ordinary language governed by the linguistic sign, the negativity constituting a judgement (as in the case of Aufhebung), or the negation internal to a judgement (as in Boolean 0–1 logic). She concludes that a 'zerological subject' – i.e. ultimately a non-subject – comes to assume thought which annuls itself. Such a 'zerological subject' is exterior to the space governed by the linguistic sign; the subject vanishes when the thought of the sign disappears, i.e. when the relation of the sign to the denotatum is reduced to zero (1969, 273–4). Kristeva has also employed the concept of orthocomplementary structure to describe the relations of elements in the paragrammatic space of poetic language to the extent that the latter goes beyond the 0–1 opposition of ordinary language and logic (1969, 265 and 273). Kristeva's theory of paragrammatism, in the light of her comparison of it with the 'zerology' of the Śūnyavāda, would tend to bridge the gulf of incommensurability between at least certain Occidental and Oriental schemata and notations.[184]

The semiotic interpretation of Mahāyānist, and in particular Mādhyamika, thought has still to be elaborated and made more precise. Certain points also are in need of clarification, for example what exactly is meant when it is said that the four members of the tetralemma 'equal' $\emptyset$. But it seems that semiotics can accommodate within its theory the idea of the tetralemma and its negation, and it appears to be worth exploring further for its potential contribution to an approach to Mahāyānist thought.

In a discussion of the Mahāyānist treatment of absolute reality, Seyfort Ruegg (1969, 383 sq.) emphasized the point that, contrary to the opinion of some scholars,[185] Madhyamaka reasoning (*yukti*) is based on the twin pillars of the principles of non-contradiction and excluded middle; and the negation of the four

koṭis then serves to bring to a stop all discursive thinking consisting of conceptual development (*prapañca*) and dichotomizing conceptualization (*vikalpa*) involving the solidarity of complementary opposites expressed as affirmation (*vidhi*) and negation (*pratiṣedha*). When the four *koṭis* – taken as being exhaustive of all imaginable positive and negative positions within discursive thought – have been used up, there remains no 'third' (indeterminate or putatively dialectical) position between the positive and negative which discursive thought could then seize on and cling to; and the mind therefore becomes still.[186] This exhaustion – and 'zeroing'[187] – of all the discursively conceivable extreme positions by means of the negation[188] of all four *koṭis* corresponds to the Middle Way, and to reality understood by the Mādhyamika as emptiness of own being and non-substantiality of all factors of existence.

Now, as already noted, it is found that reality has on occasion been indicated by a sentence that corresponds in its verbal formulation with the (unnegated) fourth *koṭi*. Nevertheless, since the *paramārtha* is regarded by the Mahāyāna as free from all the positions of the *catuṣkoṭi*, it is clearly necessary to distinguish between the use of the 'neither ... nor' formula (which is not then negated) to indicate the *paramārtha* and bi-negation as found in the 'neither ... nor' formula of the fourth *koṭi* (which is to be negated). And there does not seem to be any reason to suppose that the philosophers of the classical Madhyamaka school ever used the fourth position of the *catuṣkoṭi* to characterize or indicate the *paramārtha*; by definition, absolute reality is free from all positions comprising worldly transactional usage (*lokavyavahāra*) (Seyfort Ruegg 1969, 384 and 57).[189]

Appendix III. The logical error of negation of the antecedent and the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*

An extraneous logical problem has been injected by some writers into the discussion of Nāgārjuna's thought when they raise the question of the hypothetical judgement (Nakamura 1958, 9) or hypothetical syllogism (Robinson 1957, 296) when analysing such statements as *MMK* 7.17

> *yadi kaścid anutpanno bhāvaḥ saṃvidyate kvacit /*
> *utpadyeta sa kiṃ tasmin bhāva utpadyate 'sati //*
> If any unproduced entity were *found* anywhere it *would* be produced, but when this entity does not exist what is produced?

MMK 10:7

> *anya evêndhanād agnir indhanaṃ kāmam āpnuyāt /*
> *agnīndhane yadi syātām anyonyena tiraskṛte //*
> If fire and fuel were mutually independent,[190] fire being other than fuel might well touch the fuel

or *MMK* 13.7

> *yady aśūnyaṃ bhavet kiṃcit syāc chūnyam iti kiṃcana /*
> *na-kiṃcid asty aśūnyaṃ ca kutaḥ śūnyaṁ bhaviṣyati //*
> If something not empty existed, something called 'empty' would exist; something not empty does not exist, and how will there [then] exist something empty?

If such statements are regarded as proper hypothetical syllogisms (the form of which is in *modus ponens* $p \supset q. \supset . \sim q \supset \sim p; \therefore \sim p$, and in *modus tollens* $p \supset q; \sim q; \therefore \sim p$), it indeed turns out that the proposition would have the form $p \supset q; \sim p; \therefore \sim q$. And on this assumption the statement would involve the fallacy of negation of the antecedent violating the principle of conversion by contraposition (Nakamura 1958, 10; Robinson 1957, 297).

However, there seems to exist no justification for injecting the question of the hypothetical syllogism and the fallacy of negation of the antecedent into the discussion of Nāgārjuna's statements in question. In fact such an interpretation substitutes an altogether extraneous problem, and apparently it has thereby missed Nāgārjuna's point by failing to appreciate what he is saying in terms of his system and methods.

If we apply here the well-known Mādhyamika principle of the complementarity of binary concepts and terms, what Nāgārjuna is saying becomes clear and, in terms of his system, valid: if two opposite concepts or terms stand in a relation of complementary correlation in the framework of dichotomous conceptualization – that is, if they are *pratidvandvins* (Tib. *'gran zla* or *'gal zla*)[191] – the negation of one necessarily involves the negation of the other, without the problem of the antecedent and consequent in a hypothetical syllogism ever arising. Thus *MMK* 13.7 is parallel to 22.11 quoted above.[192] It may or may not be the case that Nāgārjuna did not here observe the principle of conversion, as claimed by Nakamura and Robinson; but given Nāgārjuna's evident purpose, his statements in question simply do not allow us to draw a conclusion (and the question is in any case hardly relevant to the analysis and understanding of what Nāgārjuna has said in the passages impugned). We are dealing here not with a schema intended to make possible the deduction or inference of *B* from *A*, but with a nexus of complementary terms which are conceptually, linguistically and logically, but not causally, interrelated.[193]

Notes

1 The word *tathāgata* here may refer to the *buddha* (see for example *MMK* 25.17 and 22.2, 14); see below, note 54 and note 62. But it is also taken in the sense of 'person'; and it is then sometimes interpreted as equivalent to *pudgala* (see for example Vasubandhu, *AKBh* 9, p. 471). – E. W. Hopkins pointed out that in the usage of the Epic *tathāgata* means 'in so (grievous) a condition', i.e. practically dead or dead (*American J. of Philology* 1911, pp. 205–209).

2 Sometimes *śāśvata* 'eternal' is taken as referring to the past (*pūrvānta*) and *ananta* 'infinite' as referring to the future (*aparānta*); cf. Candrakīrti, *P* 27.15, 21; 25.21. In *P* 27.1 *aparānta* refers to *vartamāna-ātmabhāva* (below n. 64). But Vasubandhu speaks of the thesis of the *śāśvata* nature of the *loka* being incompatible with attainment of *parinirvāṇa*, which would appear to make the term refer to the future; see *AKBh* 9 (pp. 470–471).

As for *loka*, it seems here to mean the world of living beings (cf. *jagat*) (below, n. 54); cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāṇa* (Paris 1925), p. 92. In Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* (6.129) *loka* is explained as *skandha*; cf. *MMK* 27.22. A few canonical sources add *ātman* (*attā*) before *loka*, e.g. Dīghanikāya i, p. 16 and Majjhimanikāya ii, p. 233. On *loka* = *ātman* see *AKBh* 9, pp. 470–471; *ātman* in addition is also to be found in the *Ta chih tu lun* (**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*), transl. E. Lamotte, *Le traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna*, i (Louvain, 1944), p. 155.

3 Cf. Dīghanikāya i, pp. 188–189, and iii, p. 136; Majjhimanikāya i, p. 431; Saṃyuttanikāya ii, pp. 222–223.

4 On the catuṣkoṭi *catuṣkoṭika*), often translated in the modern western literature as 'tetralemma', see S. Schayer, *Ausgewählte Kapitel aus der Prasannapadā* (Kraków, 1931), pp. xxv–xxvi, L. de La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa* (Louvain, 1923 sq.) v, pp. 43–46; ix, pp. 262–269 (on the *avyākṛtas*); E. Lamotte, *Le traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse* (Louvain, 1944), i, pp. 154, 422–423; T. R. V. Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London, 1960), p. 129 sq.; K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1963), p. 344 and passim. On the *koṭis* see also the bibliography to Appendix II below, and L. Schmithausen, *Der Nirvāṇa-Abschnitt der Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* (Vienna, 1969), p. 183 sq.

Instead of 14 unexplicated (*avyākṛta*) points some canonical sources enumerate only ten points. In such enumerations only the question about the *tathāgata*'s survival after death is put in the form of the *catuṣkoṭi*, all the other questions having only two alternatives each. – See Dīghanikāya i, p. 187 sq., and iii, pp. 134–136; Majjhimanikāya i, p. 426 sq. (Māluṅkyāputta) and 484 sq. (Vacchagotta); Saṃyuttanikāya iii, p. 258.

The Buddhist exegetical tradition recognizes in the Buddha's teaching four kinds of explanation (*vyākaraṇa*): the explicit and definitive (*ekāṃśa*), that which introduces a distinction (*vibhajya*), that which consists in a counter-question (*paripṛcchā*), and that which involves setting aside a question (*sthāpanīya*). See for example *Abhidharmakośa* 5.22. The last form is known in Pāli as *ṭhapanīya* and is mentioned e.g. in Dīghanikāya iii, p. 229, and Aṅguttaranikāya i, p. 197. Such a question is then unexplicated (*avyākṛta*; Pāli *avyākata*).

The fact that certain questions have been set aside and left unexplicated can be motivated both pedagogically and psychologically – with regard to the propensities (*āśaya*) etc. of the questioner – and logically and semantically – owing to the empty (null, *nirvastuka*) nature of the subject term and its relation to a predicate. Cf. *AKBh* 9 (pp. 470–471; *praṣṭur āśayāpekṣayā*) and *P* 22.12 (which compares the subjects in question to the empty notion of the son of a barren woman, *vandhyāputra*, to which no qualification can be applied meaningfully).

On the *avyākṛtavastus* see *AKBh* 5.22 and 9 (pp. 469–471); *MMK* 22.12 sq. and 25.17 sq.; *Madhyamakākāvatāra* 6.129; L. de La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa* v, p. 43; ix, pp. 262–269; E. Lamotte, *Le traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, i, pp. 154, 423; G. Nagao, 'The Silence of the Buddha', *Stud. in Indology and Buddhology* (S. Yamaguchi Volume, Kyōto 1955), p. 137 sq.; N. Tatia, 'The avyākṛtas', *Nava-Nālandā Mahāvihāra Research Publication*, 2, pp. 47–73; T. R. V. Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London, 1960), chapter ii; K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Bud-*

dhist Theory of Knowledge, passim; R. H. Robinson, *Philosophy East and West* 22 (1972), pp. 309–323.

The *avyākṛtavastus* partly correspond to some of the sixteen speculative opinions (*dṛṣṭi*) of the *Brahmajalasuttanta*; cf. *MMK* 27, especially verses 18 sq.

5 On this question see for example J. F. Staal, *Exploring Mysticism* (Berkeley, 1975). See also below, pp. 40, 47 and n. 182.

6 The word *catuṣkoṭi* appears in Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatāra-Pañjikā* 9.2 in connexion with a quotation.

7 For an exception see below on *MMK* 18.8, which is phrased in the form of a *catuṣkoṭi* but differs from the other examples we have to consider since it concerns the Buddha's graded teaching, which is progressively accommodated to the various levels of his disciples' understanding.

8 The copula may be unexpressed but implied.

9 See Patañjali, *Mahābhāṣya* 1.4.57 and 3.3.19.

10 In philosophical usage *prasajya-pratiṣedha* is pure negation in which no opposed (contradictory) thing is posited even by implication.

MMK 1.1 is explained by Candrakīrti in the following manner in *P* (pp. 13, 36 and 38–39); *naiva svata utpannā ity avadhāryamāṇe parata utpannā ity aniṣṭaṃ prāpnoti / na prapnoti, prasajyapratiṣedhasya vivakṣitavāt, parato 'py utpādasya pratiṣetsyamānatvāt / ... parato 'pi nôtpadyante bhāvāḥ ... dvābhyāṃ api nôpajanyante bhāvāḥ ... ahetuto 'pi nôtpadyante.* (Compare Buddhapālita, fol. 182a (ed. Walleser, pp. 11–12).) And for Bhavaviveka's explanation see his *Prajñāpradīpa*, fol. 48a (ed. Walleser, p. 10). (The Tibetan translation of *MMK* 1.1 is syntactically noteworthy: *bdag las ma yin gžan las min // gñis las ma yin rgyu med min // dṅos po gaṅ na yaṅ // skye ba nam yaṅ yod ma yin //*, the use of *ma yin* corresponding formally to the *paryudāsa* type of negation whereas *med* corresponds to the *prasajyapratiṣedha*. The Tibetan exegetical tradition takes the negation to be of the *prasajya* type, following the Indian commentators.)

On the subject of the *prasajyapratiṣedha* in Indian thought, see F. Kielhorn, transl., Nāgojībhaṭṭa, *Paribhāṣenduśekhara*[2] (Poona, 1960), p. 10; F. Edgerton, *Mīmāṃsānyāya-prakāśa* (New Haven, 1929), § 330 sq.; L. Renou, *Terminologie grammaticale du sanskrit* (Paris, 1957), p. 230, and *JA* 1957, p. 131; Y. Ojihara and L. Renou, *La Kāśika-Vṛtti* (Paris, 1960), p. 119 sq.; J. F. Staal, *BSOAS* 25 (1962), p. 58 sq.; G. Cardona, *Language* 43 (1967), p. 34 sq.; B. K. Matilal, *The Navyanyāya Doctrine of Negation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 156–157, and *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis* (The Hague, 1971), pp. 163–164; D. Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra* (Paris, 1969), Index s.v. *prasajyapratiṣedha*; Y. Kajiyama, *WZKS* 17 (1973), p. 162 sq.

11 *P*, p. 10–11: ... *sa evedānīṃ sāṃvṛtaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ, svabhāvenānutpannatvād aryajñānāpekṣayā nāsmin nirodho vidyate* ...

12 In *P*, p. 12.4, Candrakīrti speaks of the *pratiṣedha* of *nirodha* being mentioned in the verse before that of *utpāda*, but he does not go into the logical nature of this negation.

13 See *P* 18.6 (p. 355.7) on the contradictory opposition (*virodha*) *ātman/anātman* (below, p. 8). According to *P* 7.30 and 25.14, *bhāva* and *abhāva* are mutually exclusive (*parasparaviruddha*) contraries, like light and darkness (which are also *parasparāsaṃgata* in *P* 20.11, p. 400.5). Similarly *sad* and *asad* are *parasparaviruddha* according to *P* 1.7. See further *P* 6.4 and 20.11 concerning the opposition *saṃsāra/nirvāṇa*, and *P* 16.8 concerning *bandha/mokṣa*.

That *sad* and *asad* are *parasparaviruddha* has been stated by *Nāgārjuna* himself in *MMK* 8.7.

14 Compare Nāgārjuna's use of dilemmas to destroy the substantialist views of his opponents based on the assumption of a *svabhāva*, etc.

15 On the somewhat different language of the Stotras and Stavas (*bstod ćhogs*) attributed to Nāgārjuna, however, see D. Seyfort Ruegg, Le *Dharmadhātustava*, in *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de M. Lalou* (Paris, 1971), p. 448 sq. – On the use of paradox and antiphrasis in certain Sūtras see D. Seyfort Ruegg, *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston Rin chen grub* (Paris, 1973), pp. 87–88, 114 note 3, 118 note 2, 134 note 3. The aim seems on occasion to be to produce perplexity (*the ćhom* = *śaṃśaya*) – a kind of intellectual 'torsional' tension – which would permit one somehow to comprehend reality (see also *Théorie du tathāgatagarbha*, p. 387). (For a similar process in Zen cf. C.Y. Cheng, *Journ. of Chinese Philosophy* 1 [1973], p. 77 sq.)

16 *sarva* can refer to all *saṃskṛtadharmas*: Saṃyuttanikāya iv, p. 15; *Mahāniddesa* i; p. 132, and *AKBh* 5.27 (p. 301.7–8) and 9, p. 465. Candrakīrti glosses *sarva* by *skandha, dhātu, āyatana*, etc.

17 The antonym of *tathya* is *mṛṣā* (see below). Candrakīrti explains *tathya* here as that for which there is not otherness (change), and *atathya* as that for which there is otherness (change).

For the present use of *tathya* cf. the *Kālakārāma-suttanta* (Aṅguttaranikāya ii, p. 24).

18 *vā* = *ca* according to *P*, p. 371.6.

19 These are the two most usual meanings of *anu*. This is certainly not to deny that the word *anuśāsana* is regularly used in Sanskrit, including the Buddhist literature, to mean teaching, instruction, without any specific reference to progressivity or fitness, as is also *anusāsana* in Pāli. It is not possible to determine with absolute certainty what value Nāgārjuna assigns to this word in *MMK* 18.8; we can only observe that in 18.11 he uses *śāsana*, and that if 18.8 were to be understood as referring to the standarized classical *catuṣkoṭi* this would be the only passage where it is not negated.

20 See Majjhimanikāya i, p. 499. – This particular situation differs from that of the *avyākṛtavastus* in which a reply is to be set aside; for in this case the Buddha *is* able to answer either by an explicit and definitive (*ekāṃśa*) explanation, or by introducing a distinction (*vibhajya*), or perhaps by asking a counter-question (*paripṛcchā*), in other words by employing one of the accepted modes of *vyākaraṇa* (see above, n. 4).

21 For the idea, compare Aṅguttaranikāya ii, pp. 25–26, where it is explained that because the *tathāgata* does not construe as either true or false the perceptions and concepts people have, but knows them just as they are, he is *tādī*.

22 Similarly, we might say of something that it is roughly so, i.e. neither just so nor quite the opposite, although if analysed it would require further qualification. It is to be noted that the 'neither . . . nor' form of statement is here intended for a category of persons inferior to these in question under *MMK* 18.6; for here this formulation does not refer to the highest level of the understanding of reality.

23 *P*, p. 371: *vandhyāsutasyâvadātaśyāmatāpratiṣedhavad ubhayam etat pratiṣiddham* 'as in the case of the negation of the paleness and darkness of the son of a barren woman, both [*tathya* and *atathya*] are negated'. On the *vandhyāsuta* (or *vandhyāputra*) see *P*. 13.3, 22.12, 24.1, and 27.28.

Bhāvaviveka's explanation differs in some respects, but these differences do not concern the question being treated here. See Appendix I below.

24 *P*, p. 369.13 and 370.1.

MMK 18.8 could also be interpreted according to the *māyā* comparison; that is, the world is neither 'so' ('true') because it is not as it appears, nor is it 'not so' ('false') because of origination in dependence (*pratītyasamutpāda*). According to the *marīci* comparison, we should be wrong to look for water in a mirage; and this

cannot even be the object of strict negation since the very possibility of water simply does not arise in the case of the mirage.

25 Quoted in *P* 18.6. Cf. *CŚ* 16.10, according to which each of the four positions involves a fault; and *CŚ* 14.21 and 16.24–25 quoted below.

26 Quoted in *P* 18.6. In his commentary on this verse of the *CŚ*, Candrakīrti explains that 'all' refers to all things (*dṅos-po thams cad*) as excluded.

27 *P*, p. 358.9: *evaṃ nâsty ātmā kaścin na câpy anātmā kaścid astîti deśitam*. Compare *MMK* 27.13:

> *evaṃ dṛṣṭir atīte yā nâbhūm aham abhūm aham /*
> *ubhayaṃ nôbhayaṃ cêti naiṣā samupapadyate //*

and *Ratnāvalī* 2.3:

> *naivam ātmā na cânātmā yāthābhūtyena labhyate /*
> *ātmānatmakṛtadṛṣṭī varvārâsmān mahāmuniḥ //*

28 *P* 18.6 (p. 360).

29 Here the word *ātman* seems to be used practically as a reflexive pronoun.

30 *Samādhirājasūtra* 37.35, quoted in *P* 18.5 (pp. 354–355).

31 See *MMK* 16.2; 18.1; 22.1, 8 (and cf. 10.14–15); *P* 18.5 (p. 355). Cf. Saṃyuttanikāya iii, p. 44, and iv, p. 287 on the *caturdhā vicāraḥ* (*rūpaṃ* [*vedanām*, etc.] *attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ samanupassati, attani rūpam, rūpasmiṃ attānaṃ samanupassati*).

32 See *P* 18.5 (p. 355).

33 *P* 18.5–6.

34 As has been observed by Vasubandhu (*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* 9, p. 470), the Buddhas teach the *dharma* with the same care as a feline carries its young, neither holding them too tightly between its teeth nor letting them drop. So the Buddha sometimes teaches an *ātman* to exclude nihilism, and sometimes he teaches the *anātman* to exclude eternalism, the two philosophical extreme positions.

35 To be noted is the difference between the persons for whom the 'neither ... nor' statement is intended here and in *P* 18.8 quoted above.

36 Cf. *MMK* 27.8 and 9.12 on the *ātman* (*upādātṛ*) as neither existing nor not existing.

37 Here then, contrary to the case under *MMK* 18.8, the 'neither ... nor' statement is intended for the superior disciples.

38 This point has been made elsewhere; see *P* 13.3, 18.8, 22.12, 24.1 and 27.29 for the *vandhyāputra* (etc.) comparison. Cf. also *P* 27.8.

39 Cf. *CŚ* 16.10 according to which each of the four positions involves a fault.

40 Cf. *CŚ* 16.24–25:

> *gcig yod gcig med ces bya ba // de ñid min 'jig rten pa'aṅ min //*
> *des na 'di yod 'di ces med // brjod pa ñid du nus ma yin //*
> *yod daṅ med daṅ yod med žes // gaṅ la phyogs ni yod min pa //*
> *de la yun ni riṅ po na'aṅ // klan ka brjod pa nus ma yin //*

To say something is and something is not is neither really true nor [a] worldly [conventional statement]; therefore it cannot be said that this is [but] that this is not. He who has no thesis stating existence, non-existence and [both] existence and non-existence cannot ever be criticized. *CŚ* 16.25 is quoted in *P*, p. 16:

> *sad asat sadasac cêti yasya pakṣo na vidyate /*
> *upālambhaś cireṇâpi tasya vaktuṃ na śakyate //*

Cf. Nāgārjuna's *MMK* 24.3 and *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29 and 59, where there is however no explicit reference to the *catuṣkoṭi*, and the subject is a proposition

(*pratijñā*) demonstrating some particular thesis which involves onto-logical faults (as opposed to emptiness against which no objection can be properly urged).

41 Cf. *P* 1, p. 26.

42 This word is interpreted as meaning 'not learnt from another' (*násmin parapratyayo 'stity aparapratyayaṃ paropadeśāgamyaṃ svayam evádhigantavyam*, *P*, p. 373.1; cf. *P*, p. 493.10–11: *sa hi paramārtho 'parapratyayaḥ śāntaḥ pratyātmavedya āryāṇāṃ sarvaprapañcātītaḥ*).

43 *anānārtha* = Tib. *don tha med min*. Cf. the introductory verses to the *MMK* (pp. 3–4) where the *pratītyasamutpāda* is also so qualified.

44 For the Mādhyamika, *pratītyasamutpāda* does not operate on *dharmas* or *bhāvas* having real and immutable natures, and the causal process is therefore in a certain sense indeterminate and irrational. See the introductory verses to the *MMK* and *P*, p. 9 sq.; and the *pratītyasamutpāda* is described as *sāṃvṛta* (*P*, pp. 10–11). Bhāvaviveka for his part considers that the *pratītyasamutpāda* has two aspects, the absolute one and the relative one. See his *Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā* 2.10 (ed. Gokhale, *IIJ* 15 [1973], p. 44).

45 The term *śūnyatā* could then be described as metalinguistic since it does not refer to any given (first-order) object or thing. Indeed, because it allows the Mādhyamika philosopher to analyse the terms of the Ābhidharmika's philosophical parlance, which are second-order terms inasmuch as they do not refer directly to objects in the world but rather to analytical concepts such as the *dharma* lists, *śūnyatā* might even be called a third-order term.

46 Cf. Nāgārjuna's commentary on his *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 70, at the end.

47 *P* 18.9, p. 375.9; cf. p. 11.1.

48 See above, n. 42.

49 *P*, p. 374.

50 *P* 24.8 (p. 493.11); cf. 25.24.

51 *P* 1.1 (p. 57.8).

52 *P*, p. 11.1. (quoted above, n. 11).

53 Cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, 'Madhyamaka', *MCB* 2 (1933), p. 39.

54 It is to be noted that Nāgārjuna here takes *tathāgata* as a synonym of *buddha*, and *loka* as a synonym of *jagat* 'world (of living beings)'. Cf. above, notes 1 and 2.

55 This and the following predicates refer to the masculine noun *tathāgata* according to the context; La Vallée Poussin however reads *aśūnyaṃ*, and restores *śūnyam* (cf. *P* 15.2, p. 264). The Tibetan translation reads

> *stoṅ ṅo žes kyaṅ mi brjod de // mi stoṅ žes kyaṅ mi bya žiṅ //*
> *gñis daṅ gñis min mi bya ste // gdags pa'i don de brjod par bya //*

J. W. de Jong translates (*Cinq chapitres de la Prasannapadā* [Paris, 1949], p. 80): Ne peut dire ni qu'il est vide, ni qu'il est non-vide ... The meaning given in our translation above, following the Sanskrit, seems to be appropriate, since saying 'empty' involves the logically complementary (and opposite) idea of 'not empty', etc., within the frame of dichotomizing conceptualization (*vikalpa*) which involves pairs of binary concepts (*pratidvandvin, pratibandhin*, etc.) See *MMK* 13.7 (quoted below, p. 55).

56 This development is not to be found in the Tibetan translation of *P*.

57 Cf. *P* 15.2 (p. 264).

58 Cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, 'Documents d'Abhidharma', *MCB* 5 (1937), p. 54.

59 Cf. *Abhidharmakośa* 2.35–36.

60 Cf. *Abhidharmakośa* 4.2–3; E. Lamotte, 'Traité de l'acte', *MCB* 4 (1936), p. 165.

61 See below, pp. 23, 25.

62 Here *tathāgata* = *bhagavant* (cf. *MMK* 25.17) or *buddha* (22.15). *MMK* 25.17 and

21, but not *P* 22.12–3, have *paraṃ nirodhāt* (instead of *maraṇāt*). Cf. above, n. 2, and n. 54.

63 Cf. *P*, 13.3, 18.8, 22.12, 24.1, and 27.29.

64 Cf. *MMK* 27. In *P* the *aparānta* is connected with the *vartamāna-ātmabhāva* (p. 572.14–15). – For *MMK* 25.17 on the *bhagavant* see below, p. 16.

65 *añjanā* = Tib. *ston pa* 'show, reveal'; and *ajyate* = Tib.*mṅon byed*. – The Tibetan version does not translate *vidyate: gal te mya ṅan 'das pa ni // dṅos min dṅos po med min na //*

66 *tasmān naiva bhāvo naivâbhāvo nirvāṇam iti yā kalpanā sâpi nópapadyate evêti na yuktam etat*. This supposition also is not possible because it still presupposes that *bhāva* and *abhāva* are real (*siddha*), and that *nirvāṇa* is some sort of entity that consists in the bi-negation of these two reals.

67 *ūhyate* (?) = Tib.*mṅon pa* 'be clearly seen'. Read *ajyate* as in 25.16?

68 Cf. *P* 22.12 (p. 446): *naiva śāśvato nâśāvataś ca lokaḥ; naivântavān nànantavāṃś ca lokaḥ; naiva bhavati na na bhavati tathāgataḥ paraṃ maraṇāt*; 25.21 (p. 536): *naivântavān nānantavān lokaḥ; naiva śāśvato naivâśāśvato lokaḥ*.

For the positive formula see *P* 27.15: *sa eva deva sa eva manuṣyaḥ*.

69 Above, p. 5 sq.

70 See Candrakīrti's commentary quoted above, p. 6.

71 Still, Candrakīrti's explanation of *MMK* 18.8, which compares the case to the negation of the qualifications 'pale' and 'dark' with respect to the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāsuta*, i.e. an empty subject), does not seem to have made this point absolutely clear. For the bi-negation of these qualifications in the case of the *vandhyāsuta* would apparently correspond to the fourth *koṭi before* its negation, whereas (as seen above) it too has to be, and in fact is, negated by the Mādhyamikas. The discrepancy is puzzling, and may be due to an oversight or to inaccurate composition on Candrakīrti's part; or the point may have seemed to him so obvious in view of what is said elsewhere that he did not feel it necessary to dwell on it. Again, it might be that Candrakīrti switched just here from thinking of the 'neither ... nor' form of statement represented by the fourth position of the *catuṣkoṭi* to the 'neither ... nor' type of statement to be found for example in *MMK* 25.10cd.

It is interesting to note that the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (3, p. 188) equates the *cātuṣkoṭika* with the *lokavyavahāra*, outside which anything is a mere *flatus vocis* (*vāgmātra*), just like the son of a barren woman.

72 The use of bi-negation to refer to a high level of realization may have been suggested by the highest of the four *ārūpyas*, the *naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāsamāpatti*, 'attainment of neither notion nor non-notion'. However, this *samāpatti* does *not* represent in Buddhism the highest level of *samāpatti* (the *saṃjñāveditanirodha* or *nirodhasamāpatti*), and it certainly does not therefore correspond to *nirvāṇa*.

73 Compare the Vātsīputrīya theory of the *pudgala* that is neither identical with nor different from the *skandhas*, the relation between the two being then undeterminable (*avaktavya*)?

74 It is to be recalled that in the Vedānta school the term *anirvacanīya* 'indeterminable' is applied not to the absolute *brahman* – which is unique and without a second – but to *avidyā* and *nāmarūpa*. Cf. P. Hacker, *ZDMG* 100 (1950), p. 255.

75 Cf. *Kāśyapaparivarta* § 60 *Samādhirājasūtra* 9.27.

76 Saṃyuttanikāya ii, p. 17 (Kacchānagotta-suttanta).

77 Cf. *MMK* 15.6.

According to Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* 1.8 (p. 22), moreover, the *Kātyāyanāvavāda* helps also to establish one of the most important tenets of the Madhyamaka school from both the soteriological and gnoseological standpoints,

namely that knowledge (*jñāna*) of *nairātmya* and *śūnyatā* is common to both the Ārya-Śrāvaka and the Bodhisattva. Cf. *P* 18.5.

78 For references see above, n. 10. This interpretation of the commentators would suggest that they regarded the sentences and *koṭis* in question as contradictory rather than as contraries.

79 Bhāvaviveka, *Tarkajvālā* 3.26 (fol. 63b–64a; cf. fol. 63a) referring to *MMK* 1.1.

80 See *MMK* 18.7 quoted above, p. 12.

81 *MMK* 22.14 also links by means of the particle *vā* the first two *koṭis* relating to the *buddha*'s existence after *nirodha*. See 18.8, where the reading *na vā tathyam* is, however, La Vallée Poussin's reconstruction. In *Ratnāvalī* 2.6 the positions are linked by *athavā* and *vā*.

82 On *naiva . . . na*(*iva*) sentences see above, p. 17.

83 Bhāvaviveka (*Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā* 3.124 sq.) discusses the negation of the socalled *ubhayavāda* (*gñi gar smra ba* 'doctrine of both [positions maintained simultaneously]'), the conjunction of two opposed – and contradictory (:*virodha*) – positions which he ascribes to the Nirgranthakas. And he applies this case to the idea of the existence-cum-non-existence of the self, substantiality and permanence (*Tarkajvālā ad loc.*, *P*, vol.ja, fol. 94b).

84 Compare Jayatilleke and R. Robinson (below, pp. 42, 44, 46).

85 Compare Raju, Robinson *et al.* (below, pp. 40–6).

86 Cf. R. H. Robinson's criticism of Jayatilleke in *PEW* 19 (1969), p. 75 (below, p. 45).

87 Compare Jayatilleke (below, p. 45). (For the 'neither . . . nor' formulation in *MMK* 25.10 see above, p. 17).

88 *MAVBh* 1.6.

89 *MAV* 1.3cd.

90 *MAVṬ* 1.2 (pp. 9–10).

91 *MAV* 1.3a.

92 Cf. *MAVBh* 1.3cd: *sattvād abhūtaparikalpasya, asattvād dvayasya, sattvāc ca śūnyatāyā abhūtaparikalpe tasyāṃ câbhūtaparikalpasya / sā ca madhyamā pratipat / yat sarvaṃ naikāntena śūnyaṃ naikāntenâśūnyam / evam ayaṃ pāṭhaḥ prajñāpāramitādiṣv anulomito bhavati: sarvam idaṃ na śūnyaṃ nâpi câśūnyam iti //*
On the relation between duality – the imaginarily constructed – and *abhūtaparikalpa* see *MAVṬ* 1.4 quoted below. For Candrakīrti's critique of this passage of the *MAV* see *P* 22.11 (p. 445).

93 'Representation' here has to be taken in the active sense. This 'representation' is pure (*mātra*), i.e. consciousness altogether free from the subjective as well as from the objective side of cognition. Although grammatically a causative form, *vijñapti* does not seem here actually to have a causative meaning (cf. Tib. *rnam par rig pa* instead of *unam par rig byed*).

94 That is, if there is in fact no real object of cognition established separately from cognition, there can be no corresponding subject or cognizer either. Consciousness is therefore pure and simple, without the duality of subject and object, cognizer and cognized thing.

95 Apprehension (*upalabdhi*) involves (1) the 'processive being' (*bhāva*) or action of apprehension, (2) the apprehender or cognising agent (*kartṛ*), and (3) the means or instrument of apprehension (*karaṇa*). – On these three expressions in the terminology of Indian grammar see L. Renou, *Terminologie grammaticale du sanskrit* (Paris, 1957), s.vv. The *bhāvasādhana* (Renou: "qui a pour mode de réalisation l'entrée dans un état" [p. 244], "qui a pour mode de réalisation la production [d'un phénomène nouveau]" [p. 125]) is opposed to the *karmasādhana* (Renou: "qui a l'object-transitif [i.e. une action passive] pour mode de réalisation" [p. 125]). Thus, taking as examples the words *śeṣa* and *vidhi*, as *bhāvasādhana* they mean 'the

leaving [of something: *śeṣaṇa*]' and 'enjoining [of something new: (*asato*) *vidhānam*]', and as *karmasādhana* they mean 'remainder' (*śiṣyate*) and 'the enjoined' (:*vidhīyate*); cf. Patañjali, *Mahābhāṣya* 1.1.57 (i, p. 144) and Kaiyaṭa, *Pradīpa* 1.2.64. Here *sādhana* may be taken in the active sense of 'realizer'. The term *bhāva* has been studied by A. Wezler, *Bestimmung und Angabe der Funktion von Sekundār-Suffixen durch Pāṇini* (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 103 sq.

96 Tib. *las* = *karman* 'object', i.e. the object to be apprehended (*upalabhyārtha*). As seen above, the Vijñānavāda maintains that such an object does not exist independently.

97 Tib.: *las med pas de gsum char yaṅ mi ruṅ ste.*

98 Tib. (D, fol. 202b): *de'i phyir mñam mo // don mi dmigs pa daṅ rnam par rig pa ćam du dmigs pa yaṅ med par bye brag med pa'i phyir mćhuṅs pa ñid du šes par bya'o//.*

99 See *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* 5.21. Cf. *RGV* 1.154 (which reads in *pāda b: upaneyaṃ na kiṃcana*). On this verse and its significance for the Mahāyānist theory of ultimate reality cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg, *Théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, pp. 313, 333 sq.

100 Sthiramati alludes here to an inference: *kim tarhi kleśavyavadānapakṣasāmarthyāt todastitvam anumīyate / 'anyathā' iti yadi tasya sarvathābhāva evêṣyate 'na bandho na mokṣa' iti / (MAVṬ* 1.5, pp. 17–18).

101 Vasubandhu explains (*MAVBh* 1.3): *na śūnyaṃ śūnyatayā câbhūtaparikalpena ca / na câśūnyaṃ dvayena grāhyena grāhakena ca / 'sarvaṃ' saṃskṛtaṃ câbhūtaparikalpākhyam, asaṃskṛtaṃ ca śūnyatākhyam* / 'Not empty with respect to emptiness [*pariniṣpanna*] and *abhūtaparikalpa* [:*paratantra* /, and not non-empty with respect to duality – viz. the cognized and cognizer [:*parikalpita*]. "All": the conditioned known as *abhūtaparikalpa* and also the unconditioned known as emptiness.'

102 The *parikalpita* on the contrary is non-existent *substantialiter* (*dravyatas*); but it nevertheless exists conventionally (*vyavahāratas*) so that it is counted as one of the three *svabhāvas* (*MAVṬ* 1.6, p. 19.1; cf. 1.14, p. 37.1). On the *abhūtaparikalpa* or *paratantra* as a *vastu* existing *substantialiter* (*dravyatas*) and by own nature (*svabhāvatas*) see *MAVṬ* 1.2 (pp. 9–10; on p. 10.14 *vastumātra* is probably to be read, instead of *bhāvamātra* as in Pandeya's edition).

The *Tattvaprakāśa* attributed to Advayavajra (ed: H. P. Shastri, p. 46) seems to suggest that the Yogācāra position does not altogether go beyond the *catuṣkoṭi*, as does the Mādhyamika's.

103 Contrast the relation between the *paratantra* and the *pariniṣpanna* in *MSABh* 6.1 (below, p. 32).

104 Tib.: *gñis dṅos med pa'i dṅos med pa'i // dṅos po stoṅ pa'i mćhan ñid do //* But *MAVBh* and *MAVṬ* take *dvayābhāva* and *abhāvasya bhāvaḥ* as two coordinate things; and in the verse, instead of *gñis dṅos med pa'i*, there is found the variant reading *gñis dṅos med daṅ* adopted by S. Yamaguchi in his edition. (The sDe·dge edition of *MAVṬ* curiously reads in the first *pāda: gñis dṅos med pa'i dṅos po yi.*)

Although *śūnya* and *śūnyatā* are not normally synonyms, Vasubandhu and Sthiramati take *śūnya* here as equivalent to *śūnyatā*, with metrical elision of the *bhāvapratyaya-tā-(kārikānuguṇyena* as Sthiramati remarks). Further on (p. 38.6–7) Sthiramati observes that *śūnyatā* is not different from what is *śūnya*.

105 It is to be noted that *bhāva* and *abhāva* are here translated in Tibetan according to the sense either as *dṅos po* and *dṅos (po) med pa*, or as *yod pa* and *med pa*.

106 See Sthiramati's explanation quoted below.

107 *jñāna* is omitted by both Sthiramati and the Tibetan translation of *MAVBh*.

108 E.g. *dharmatā* of the *dharmas* and *śūnyatā* of empty things; see *MAVṬ* quoted below.

109 Sthiramati thus interprets the grammatical construction of *abhūtaparikalpa* in two ways, taking it either as locative or as instrumental. – See *MAVṬ* 1.2 (p. 11.30–31) on the *abhūta*° as the locus for the construction of duality or as the instrument for the construction of unreal duality.

110 Tib. (D, fol. 212a): *dṅos po med pa'i dṅos po žes bya ba de dag gaṅ yin / dṅos po med pa'i bdag ñid ni yod pa ñid do // gžan du na de'i dṅos po med pa'i dṅos po stoṅ pa med pa'i phyir ro // gñis kyi dṅos po yod pa ñid du 'gyur ro // de'i phyir de ltar dṅos po med pa'i ṅo bo ñid stoṅ pa ñid kyi mćhan ñid du yoṅs su bstan pa yin no žes bya ba smos te / dṅos po'iṅo bo'i mćhan ñid du ni ma yin no //* – The Sanskrit of Pandeya's edition differs.

111 Here *prāgabhāva* and *pradhvaṃsābhāva* would be possible only if there were self-appropriation appropriation (*svopādāna*). And *anyonyābhāva* is not possible because it implies mutual support.

112 Cf. *MAVBh* 1.16: *āryajñānagocaratvāt paramārthaḥ, paramajñānaviṣayatvāt*. Cf. *MAV* 3.11.

113 Thus, for the Vijñānavādin, the *paratantrasvabhāva* (:*abhūtaparikalpa*) and the *pariniṣpannasvabhāca* (or *śūnyatā*) are both real; but while the former is a *vastu* existing *substantialiter*, as seen above, the latter is not.

114 D, fol. 212b: *gal te yaṅ dag pa ma yin pa kun riog pa'i stoṅ pa ñid chos ñid yin na / ci ste de las gžan žes bya ba'am / 'on te gžan ma yin že na / de'i phyir de ni stoṅ pa ñid kyi mćhan ñid do žes bya ba smos te / dṅos po med pa'i ṅo bo ñid kho na'o //* The Sanskrit of Pandeya's text is hardly intelligible since, if the subject is *śūnyatā/dharmatā*, the forms *anya*, *ananya* and *vaktavya* would be expected to be feminine to accord with their subject (as on p. 38.15).

115 See below, p. 31. Cf. *MAV* 1.22–23; *MAVṬ* 1.2 (p. 10.21: *śūnyatā hi viśuddhyālambanā*[?]: *stoṅ pa ñid ni rnam par dag pa'i dmigs pa ste*).

116 *anyānanyatva = gžan daṅ gžan ma yin pa*. – Cf. Candrakīrti, *P*, p. 64.

117 But cf. *MAVṬ* 1.21 (p. 46.14–15): *yady abhāvasvabhāvaśūnyatā nócyeta śūnyatāyā abhāva eva prasajyeta / tadabhāvāc ca pudgaladharmayoḥ pūrvavad bhāvaḥ syāt /* 'Were emptiness having *abhāva* as its own nature not stated, there would result the non-existence of emptiness; and because of its non-existence *pudgala* and *dharma* would exist as before', viz. before their emptiness was realized.

118 *MAVṬ* 1.14 (p. 37.18): *yady abhāvātmikā śūnyatā kathaṃ paramārtha ucyate / paramajñānaviṣayatvād anityatāvat, na tu vastutvāt /*; 1.14. (p. 38.16): *śūnyatā tu na bhāvaḥ*.

119 Viz. the enjoyer (*bhoktṛ*), etc., according to *MAV* 1.18, i.e. the inner bases (*ādhyātmikāny āyatanāni, MAVBh*).

120 These are respectively numbers 15 and 16 in the lists of the sixteen aspects of *sūnyatā* (see *MAV* 1.18–21). Cf. E. Obermiller, *IHQ* 9 (1933), p. 170 sq.; E. Lamotte *Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, iv, p. 28 sq. (who takes *abhāvasvabhāva* as a *dvandva* compound!).

121 Cf. Candrakīrti, *P* 13.8 (which quotes *Kāśyapaparivarta* § 63–65); *Madhyamakāvatāra* 6.34.

122 Above, pp. 28,30.

123 Cf. E. Frauwallner, *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus*[3] (Berlin, 1969), p. 351. – The objections against Frauwallner's view on this point made by P. Jaini (*BSOAS* 21 [1956], pp. 48–53) and A. Hirakawa (*Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* [Tokyo, 1973], p. ii) are indecisive (and the latter author has not correctly interpreted Frauwallner's position on the authorship of the *Triṃśikā*, which he suggests ascribing not to his Vasubandhu I but to his Vasubandhu II, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*).

124 See *MAVBh* 1.14.

125 Such descriptions of reality are also to be found e.g. in the Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtras. See for example the *Saptaśatikā* (ed. Masuda, p. 195) with regard to both *tathatā* and *tathāgata*.

126 Here, accordingly, we again find that the bi-negation of opposed predicates of the *paramārtha* is stated with respect to different natures, namely the *parikalpita* and *paratantra svabhāvas* on the one side and the *pariniṣpanna svabhāva* on the other side. Cf. above, pp. 23, 25–6, 31.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that here the *paratantra* is taken together with the *parikalpita* and that it is therefore on the side of the unreal, whereas in the passages quoted above from the *MAV* and its commentaries it is taken together with the *pariniṣpanna* and is therefore on the side of the real. (As a consequence, in the *MSABh* it is the *pariniṣpanna* that evidently serves as what the later exegetical traditions refers to as the 'ground of emptiness' [*stoṅ gži*]; for it is empty of the *paratantra* as well as of the *parikalpita*. But in the *MAV* and the standard Vijñānavāda doctrine as codified by the doxographers, it is the *paratantra* that serves as the 'ground of emptiness'; for once it is realized as empty of the imaginarily constructed it is the *pariniṣpanna*.) This appears to be a major difference between the standard Vijñānavāda and the *MSABh* and seems to set the latter text apart from the main tradition of the school. (On these two theories see also our *Théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, p. 326 sq.)

This fact is of importance in determining the authorship of the *MSABh*, which has been ascribed by a later Indo-Tibetan tradition to Vasubandhu, who is considered by it as the author of both the *MAVBh* and the *Triṃśikā*. In view of the doctrinal difference noted here, however, the uncertainty concerning the ascription is strengthened. – It may be recalled that Ārya Vimuktisena appears to ascribe a passage found in the *MSABh* (12.9) to Asaṅga; see his *Abhisamayālaṃkāravṛtti* 1.72–73 (ed. C. Pensa, pp. 113–115). (On the other hand, agreement between the *Triṃśikā* and the *MAVBh* on the point under discussion is not absolutely conclusive as to the identity of the author of these two texts, since it is only natural that a standard treatise of the Vijñānavāda like the *Triṃśikā* should agree on such a point with basic Śāstras of the school like the *MAV* and the *MAVBh*.)

127 E. H. Johnston in his edition of the text read *sato nâsato 'śakyas tarkayitum*. The Tibetan translation has: *gaṅ žig med min yod min yod med ma yin yod med laṣ gžan du'aṅ // brtag par mi nus* . . . L. Schmithausen has proposed accordingly the correction *sataś câsataḥ* (*WZKS* 15 [1971], p. 136). Johnston noted that the reading *śakyas* instead of *aśakyas* is found in his manuscript B.

128 *RGV* 1.10–12.

129 Here *tarka* is not synonymous with reasoning in general (*yukti* = *rigs pa*, etc.) but signifies hypothetical thinking within the domain of dichotomizing speculation. Absolute reality is always considered by the Mahāyāna to be beyond this type of thinking; but this would not necessarily imply that it is irrational.

130 If Johnston's reading *aśakyas tarkayitum* were to be accepted, we would seemingly have a double negation of the four positions, in which case the *RGV* would be going a step further than the *MSA* and other comparable Mahāyānist texts. What precisely such a double negation could be intended to mean is by no means clear, however; and this interpretation is not supported either by the manuscript B and the Sanskrit commentary, or by the Tibetan translation.

131 See *RGV* 2.69 sq., 5.1. Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg, On the knowability and expressibility of absolute reality in Buddhism, *IBK* 20/1 (1971), pp. 1–7.

A 'neither . . . nor' form of statement appears in the *RGV* also in the chapter on the qualities characteristic and constitutive of the *buddha* (4.30).

132 Cf. also *MMK* 5.8 and 7.16.

133 Cf. also *MMK* 18.5.
134 In *MMK* 18.5 and 9 for example.
135 Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg, *Théorie du ta thāgatagarbha et du gotra*, p. 319 sq.; Le *Dharmadhātustava* in *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de M. Lalou* (Paris, 1971), p. 448 sq.
136 *AKBh* 9, pp. 462–463: *yadi câyaṃ* [*pudgalaḥ*] *anyaḥ skandhebhyo na vaktavyaḥ 'pañcavidhaṃ jñeyam atītānāgataṃ pratyutpannam asaṃskṛtam avaktavyam iti' na vaktavyaṃ prāpnoti / naiva hi tad atītādibhyaḥ pañcamaṃ nâpañcamaṃ vaktavyam /*
137 *AKBh* 9, p. 470. Yaśomitra remarks that the *pudgala* is not even existent on the surface level (*saṃvṛtisat*); and as an empty term it cannot therefore even be said to have the property of non-existence.

For a discussion of the relation between *jīva* and *śarīra* see also *AKBh* 5.22 (p. 294.3); pp. 465.12 and 469.9 sq.
138 *P* 1.1 (p. 64). On the absence of a third see also Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 9.35 discussed below, pp. 49 and 54.
139 *P* 21.4 (p. 413.8–9).
140 *P* 22.1 (p. 435.3). On the supposed relations between an *ātman* and the *skandhas* see above, n. 31.
141 Cf. S. Schayer, *RO* 8 (1931–1932), pp. 68–93.
142 *TSP* 339. See above, n. 138.
143 *TSP* 349.
144 *anabhilāpya* can also be used differently (see e.g. *AKBh* 2.47, p. 82.4). For Sthiramati's observations on the indeterminate see above, pp. 29, 31.
145 **Akutobhayā*, tsa, fol. 83b (Peking edition in the Japanese photographic reprint).
146 Cf. Candrakīrti, *P* 18.8, (p. 372.1).
147 Buddhapālita, vol. ća, fol. 276a–277a.
148 Buddhapālita, vol. ća, fol. 277a. See e.g. *MMK* 18.9 for the *tattvalakṣaṇa*.
149 Fol. 83a6.
150 Bhāvaviveka, *Prajñāpradīpa*, vol. ćha, fol. 236a–b.
151 *Prajñāpradīpa*, fol. 236b. Cf. **Akutobhayā*, fol. 83b.
152 See E. Lamotte, *Le traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse* (Louvain, 1944), i, pp. 45–46. (Cf. Sêng-chao's view below, p. 43).

As seen above, in certain cases a sentence having the 'neither ... nor' form (in common with the fourth *koṭi*) has been used in the texts of the Indian Madhyamaka to describe absolute reality.
153 A connexion between the Buddhist *catuṣkoṭi* and the Jaina *saptabhaṅgī* has been disputed by K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, p. 347 sq. This is due to his interpreting *koṭi* IV as consisting of a real subject such that it does not have the characteristic P or its contrary not-P, but a neutral value. On the *saptabhaṅgī*, see *op. cit.*, pp. 138 sq., 156, 338.

The Jaina position of course differs from the Buddhist since, for the Jaina, all seven positions are true for a given subject in respect to different modes.
154 It should be noted, however, that there is no evidence in the basic texts of the Madhyamaka school that a mathematical model (and place-value) had any immediate bearing on their theory of *śūnyatā*. In the Madhyamaka the term *śūnya* refers to the fact that any *dharma* is empty of own being (*svabhāvaśūnya*), in which notion there is no mathematical connotation.
155 Cf. Staal, 1962, 53.
156 As concerns Nāgārjuna, Raju's conclusion is to say the least questionable in view of what is known of his system from his many surviving works.
157 D. Ingalls has pointed out that the germ of a multi-valued logic may be found in Śaṃkara's idea of *avidyā*, which is *anirvacanīya* (*PEW* 3 [1953], p. 69 sq.).

But with respect to the idea of a separate logic of mysticism, however valid the idea of a 'mystical dialectic' may be in some domains its applicability here is highly questionable. Indeed it seems to be formally ruled out by the statements of the Madhyamaka masters themselves whose reasoning is based on the *prasaṅga* method which would fail when there are more than two truth-values, as Chari in fact himself remarked (1955, 67). Cf. *infra*, pp. 49–50, 54.

158 'If something not empty existed, something called "empty" would exist; something not empty does not exist, and how will there [then] exist something empty?'

159 For a discussion of this point see below, Appendix III.

160 Nakamura also claims that if, following Ingalls (*PEW* 3 [1953], p. 69 sq.), the germ of a multi-valued logic is to be found in Śaṃkara's idea of *avidyā*, "then the same significance can be held for the *avidyā* of Buddhism" (2, note 2).

161 Here Nakamura does not clearly distinguish in his translation between *śūnya* (and *śūnyatva*) on the one hand and *śūnyatā* on the other. (This failure to distinguish between the two concepts is especially characteristic of scholars influenced by the Sino-Japanese tradition of Buddhism, the Chinese word *kung* rendering both concepts. On the problem in Indian texts see above, n. 104.)

162 'If time is dependent on an entity, how without an entity could there be time? Now no entity exists. How [then] will time exist?'

163 But as will be seen in Appendix III, there is no reason to suppose that Nāgārjuna has in fact committed this error here.

164 In 1957, 301 Robinson recalls Nāgārjuna's denial of other cases of existential quantification, e.g. in *MMK* 27.17 and 26–27.

165 See above, p. 39.

166 On this see Jayatilleke 1967, 75.

167 *University of Ceylon Review* 7 (1950), pp. 45–55.

168 Jayatilleke's treatment of Nāgārjuna is unfortunately superficial, and rather presumptuous.

169 In 1963, 136 and 350, Jayatilleke wrote this as 'notp' (rather than as *-p*) since 'notp' is not the contradictory of '*p*'. On the first and second alternatives as contrary and opposite (rather than contradictory) see also his 1963, 341 sq.

170 "This is another reason why Robinson's proposal to translate non-quantified propositions into quantified ones . . . is unsatisfactory", Jayatilleke adds (80).

171 Although the distinction made by Jayatilleke between rejection and negation is of logical importance, it does not in fact seem to serve a purpose in the explication of the Madhyamaka and Vijñānavāda texts considered above. And its usefulness in analysing the doctrines of the Nikāyas has not been sufficiently well established by Jayatilleke.

172 Cf. above, n. 10.

173 But see F. Staal, *Exploring Mysticism*, p. 38.

174 In his *Buddhist Formal Logic* (London, 1969) R. S. Y. Chi devoted a section to the *catuṣkoṭi* (pp. 156–163); but in his Foreword to the book he has himself repudiated this treatment, describing it as 'far from correct' (p. viii) and even as 'erroneous' (p. ix). See now R. Chi, 'Topics on Being and Logical Reasoning', *PEW* 24 (1974), pp. 295–298.

175 See above, pp. 5 sq., 37–9.

176 This idea is supported also by *Samādhirājasūtra* 9.27:

> [*astîti*] *nāstîti ubhe 'pi antā*
> [*śuddhī*] *aśuddhîti ime 'pi antā* /
> *tasmād ubhe anta vivarjayitvā*
> *madhye 'pi sthānaṃ na karoti paṇḍitaḥ* //

177 In his autocommentary on *VV* 29 Nāgārjuna explains: *sarvabhāveṣu śūnyeṣv atyantopaśānteṣu prakṛtiviviktesu kutaḥ pratijña* 'when all entities are empty, altogether still and devoid of a nature how could there be a proposition [presenting them as being some thing or other]?' Cf. Candrakīrti, *PP*, p. 16.
178 As in the paradox of the liar for example (the paradox of Epimenides).
179 Cf. the remarks above on the empty (null) class.
180 See for example U. Blau, *Dreiwertige Sprachanalyse und Logik* (Munich, 1974), according to whom two-valued logic is a special case of three-valued logic, the latter being characteristic of informal thinking and ordinary language and not incompatible with two-valued logic. Cf. also W. Stegmüller, *Hauptströmungen der Gegenwartsphilosophie*, ii (Stuttgart, 1975), pp. 186–191, 216–218. Sentences with unfulfilled presuppositions arise when non-referential terms or ill-defined and vague concepts are contained in them. And elementary sentences have the truth-value of 'indeterminate' (rather than 'true' or 'false') when the subject lies in the region of vagueness of the predicate, or when the referential presuppositions are not fulfilled.
181 Staal 1975, 39, however, still has doubts about this.
182 The attempt to improve this description by referring to a mystical dialectic is hardly calculated to clarify the matter. Against this view Robinson (1957, 291) already entered a *caveat* (cf. J. May, 'Kant et le Mādhyamika', *IIJ* 3 [1959]; p. 108 sq.). See also J. W. de Jong, 'Emptiness', *JIP* 2 (1972), p. 10 sq. – On mystical intuition in the Madhyamaka, see J. W. de Jong, 'The Problem of the Absolute', *JIP* 2 (1972), p. 5; J. May, *Prasannapadā*, p. 20.
183 This sign symbolizes a non-synthetic union of different factors that may be contradictory (cf. Kristeva 1969, 197 and 253). See further below.
184 A link between poetry and trans-linguistic and trans-logical philosophy has also been pointed to for example by Chari (1954, 325) following I. H. Parsons' *Poesiens logik*. And the notion of a 'metapoetics' is undergoing further development at the present time with reference to logic, philosophy, etc. J. Kristeva herself has not pursued this matter further in her more recent *La révolution du langage poétique* (Paris, 1974).

On the question of a mathematical connotation in the theory of *śūnytā* see above, n. 154.

185 Cf. A. Kunst, 'The Principle of Excluded Middle in Buddhism', *RO* 21 (1957), pp. 141–147; H. Nakamura, *IBK* 7/1 (1958), p. 1 sq.; J. F. Staal, *BSOAS* 25 (1962), p. 68 n. 6; Y. Kajiyama, *Nava-Nālandā-Mahāvihāra Research Publication* i (1957), p. 293 sq.; T. R. V. Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London, 1955), p. 146 sq. But see L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Way to Nirvāṇa* (Cambridge, 1917), p. 111.
186 See Candrakīrti, *P* 15.7 (p. 270) quoting the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (§ 57); and *Samādhirājasūtra* 9.27 and Sāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 9.35 quoted above (p. 49).
187 Here the expression 'to zero' is being used not with a mathematical reference, but in a more general sense of an*null*ing. (Cf. above, n. 154.)
188 Jayatilleke's distinction between negation and rejection does not appear to serve any useful purpose here.
189 The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* has stated that since *lokavyavahāra* 'worldly transactional usage' belongs to the domain of the 'tetralemma' (*cātuṣkoṭika*), everything outside the *cātuṣkoṭika* is a mere *flatus vocis* (*vāgmātra*), such as the son of a barren woman (*vandhyāputra*) (3, p. 188). This evidently applies to entities and concepts on the worldly level. The same Sūtra adds that the *tathāgata* is beyond *prapañca*, and that the *tathāgata* is neither permanent (*nitya*) nor impermanent (*anitya*) (3, p. 190; 5, p. 217). The *tathāgata* is in fact undetermined (*ma ṅes pa; Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, lHa·sa ed., kha, fol. 10a–b, quoted in Bu·ston's *mjes rgyan*, fol. 33a–b; see our *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston Rin chen grub* [Paris, 1973], p. 136).

190 *anyonyena tiraskṛte* = Tib. *gcig gis gcig ni bsal 'gyur na*. Candrakīrti explains by the concept of dependence.

191 See Candrakīrti, *P* 2.15 (p. 101.13 sq.). Cf. the concept of the *pratipakṣa* (*gñen po*). See S. Schayer, *Ausgewählte Kapitel aus der Prasannapadā*, Index s.v. *pratidvandvin*; J. May, *Prasannapadā*, p. 16 and n. 68.

192 P. 13–4 – Cf. for example *MMK* 7.33cd: *saṃskṛtasyāprasiddhau ca kathaṃ setsyaty asaṃskṛtam* 'when the conditioned is unestablished how will one establish the unconditioned?'

193 Robinson (1967, 53) has himself referred to the theory of the *pratidvandvin*. Cf. Robinson's remark in *PEW* 17 (1967), p. 149. (Compare the question of the dilemma discussed by Robinson 1957, 303–304.) It is probably significant that in his work of 1967 Robinson does not advert to this supposed fallacy in the *MMK*.

Bibliographical abbreviations

AKBh	*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu, edited by P. Pradhan, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series Volume VIII, Patna, 1967.
CŚ	*Catuḥśataka* of Āryadeva, chapters 8–16 edited by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, Visva-Bharati Series No. 2, Calcutta, 1931.
MAV	*Madhyāntavibhāga* attributed to Maitreya, edited by G. M. Nagao, Tōkyō, 1964.
MAVBh	*Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu, edited by G. M. Nagao, Tōkyō, 1964.
MAVṬ	*Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* of Sthiramati, edited by Ramachandra Pandeya, *Madhyānta-Vibhāga-Śāstra*, Delhi, 1971.
MMK	*Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* of Nāgārjuna, edited by L. de La Vallée Poussin, Bibliotheca Buddhica Volume IV, St. Petersburg, 1903–13.
MSA	*Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* attributed to Maitreya, edited by S. Lévi, Paris, 1907.
MSABh	*Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* attributed to Vasubandhu, edited by S. Lévi, Paris, 1907.
P	*Prasannapadā Madhyamakavṛttiḥ* of Candrakīrti, edited by L. de La Vallée Poussin, Bibliotheca Buddhica Volume IV, St. Petersburg, 1903–13.
RGV	*Ratnagotravibhāga-Mahāyānottaratantra-Śāstra* attributed to Maitreya, edited by E. H. Johnston, Patna, 1950.
RGVV	*Ratnagotravibhāga-'Vyākhyā'*, edited by E. H. Johnston, Patna, 1950.
TS	*Tattvasaṃgraha* of Śāntarakṣita, edited by Svāmī Dvārikādāsa Śāstri, Bauddha Bhāratī Series Volume I, Vārāṇasī, 1968.
TSP	*Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* of Kamalaśīla, edited together with *TS*.

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56

THE MADHYAMAKA CRITIQUE OF EPISTEMOLOGY – I

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The Madhyamaka assertion that all existents (bhāva) are empty (śūnya) has about it an air of paradoxicality which seems to afford grounds for a quick and easy refutation of the position.[1] Thus the assertion is often challenged on the grounds that it commits the fallacy of absolute relativism. A similar sort of objection was offered by adherents of the two epistemological schools of Indian philosophy, the Nyāya and the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika (the school of Dignāga). This objection is of the form of a dilemma: Is your assertion grounded in some valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa) or not? If not, then there is no reason to believe it, and you should refrain from asserting it. If, instead, you make this assertion only after having ascertained its truth through some *pramāṇa*, then this assertion is itself false, since if there are *pramāṇas*, then it is not the case that all things are empty. For even if it is not allowed that pramāṇas are themselves real existents, a cognizable entity (*prameya*) must be an independently existing entity, and there can be *pramāṇas* only if there are real prameyas.

Objections of this sort are to be found in Gautama's *Nyāya Sūtra* (NS) and Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya* thereon (NSB). Nāgārjuna's reply to Gautama is to be found in *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (VV). It is clear from Candrakīrti that the followers of Dignāga also criticized the Madhyamaka position along these lines. Candrakīrti's response to this criticism is found in *Prasannapadā* Ch. 1. I should like here to examine the nature of the Madhyamaka response to the arguments of the Naiyāyikas and the Yogācāra-Sautrāntikas. Such an examination should be of more than merely historical interest, for this response takes the form of a critique of the epistemological enterprise itself. Thus the issues which arise in this debate will have a distinct bearing on some of the thornier issues of metaphilosophy. In Part I of the present paper I shall take up Nāgārjuna's arguments against the Nyāya position, while in Part II I shall seek to assess Vātsyāyana's defense of Gautama's position.[2]

I

In *Vigrahavyāvartanī*,[3] Nāgārjuna states the Nyāya objection in a manner somewhat different from our above characterization.

> 5. If, then, [you say that] you deny existents having apprehended them by means of perception,
> That perception by which the existents are apprehended does not exist.
>
> If [you suppose], 'Having apprehended all existents by means of perception, one denies the existents, [thus] all things are empty', this is invalid. Why? Because perception, itself a pramāṇa, being included in 'all existents', is empty. One who apprehends the existents as well is empty. Therefore there is no existent which is apprehended by the pramāṇa perception, and there is no proof of the denial of what is unapprehended. Thus your statement, 'All existents are empty', is unproven.
>
> (VV v5)

In v. 6 the objector generalizes from the case of perception (pratyakṣa) to all the pramanas: inference (anumāna), verbal testimony (āgama), and comparison (upamāna). The argument is that if all existents are empty, then the pramāṇas, being included in the extension of 'all existents', are themselves empty; like wise the knower who acquires knowledge by means of the pramāṇas. In this case, however, there can be no apprehension of the subject of the thesis to be established (pratijñā), viz., 'all existents' – since such apprehension is possible only through an accredited pramāṇa – and consequently there can be no proof of the assertion, 'All existents are empty'. The underlying claim here would seem to be this, that there is the possibility of affirming or denying a predicate of a subject only if there is the possibility of correctly cognizing that subject under some description or another; and the latter condition can be fulfilled only if there are indeed pramāṇas. It is important to note that the ontological dispute between the Mādhyamika and the Naiyāyika does not directly enter into this argument. The Naiyāyika is not here claiming that one can deny the *svabhāva* of all bhāvas only if one could somehow ascertain an existent counterpositive of the absence of svabhāva from all existents (which by hypothesis would be impossible). That issue is taken up elsewhere in VV, namely in vv.11–12, 61–64. Here the issue is primarily epistemological in character, it is just over the question whether there are valid means of knowledge.

Nāgārjuna's response to this objection, which begins at v.30 and runs through v.51, starts with an acknowledgement of the force of the objection:

> 30. If I apprehended something and [then] affirmed or denied
> By means of perception etc., together with their objects, then for me there is non-apprehension because of the non-existence of that [pramāṇa].

> If I somehow apprehended an object by means of the four pramāṇas, perception, inference, verbal testimony, and comparison, or by one of the four pramāṇas, then indeed I would affirm or deny. But since I apprehend no object whatsoever, I neither affirm nor deny.
>
> (VV v.30)

If it were his intention to either affirm or deny svabhāva of all existents, then he would be forced to allow that there are pramāṇas. There are, however, no pramāṇas, hence he neither affirms nor denies. We shall come presently to the question, what sort of statement the Mādhyamika might have in mind which is neither an affirmation nor a denial. For now we shall concern ourselves just with the question, why Nāgārjuna believes there to be no pramāṇas.

'If you think the establishment of the various objects, the prameyas, is through the pramāṇas, just as [the establishment] of what is to be measured is by means of a measure, in that case how is there the establishment of these four pramāṇas, perception, inference, verbal testimony, and comparison?' (VV v.31) The pramāṇas may be defined as just those types of cognition whereby the nature of the reals is correctly apprehended. It is then legitimate to ask how we are to ascertain which among the various kinds of cognition are the pramāṇas. In accordance with his usual practice, Nāgārjuna considers possible answers to this question on the basis of an exhaustive classification of kinds of proof of the pramāṇas. (Cf. vv.40–2, 51.) His classification rests on a dichotomy: The pramāṇas may be proven either intrinsically (svataḥ) or extrinsically (parataḥ). When the various types of intrinsic and extrinsic proof are taken into account, this yields the following schematism:

1. the pramāṇas are proven intrinsically, i.e., without there occurring in their proof any mention of their objects, the prameyas
    a. one pramāṇa is proven by another; this may be interpreted in any of three ways:
        i. one instance of perception is proven by another instance of perception, etc.
        ii. one instance of perception is proven by some instance of inference, verbal testimony, or comparison, etc.
        iii. perception (generically) is proven by inference, etc.
    b. the pramāṇas are by definition those instruments whereby we establish the nature of the prameyas, and as such they are not themselves amenable to proof (in v.51. this is referred to as proof 'without ground' [akasmāt], but in v.33 it is treated as a kind of intrinsic proof)
    c. a pramāṇa is self-validating, i.e., it proves both itself and other things, by analogy to fire, which is said to be self-illuminating; an individual instance of perception etc. establishes both its object and the validity of the cognition whereby that object is known

2. the pramāṇas are proven extrinsically, i.e., the proof that there are valid means of knowledge makes use of the assumption that there are independently existing reals the nature of which is known
   a. the proof of the pramāṇas is logically dependent on our knowledge of the prameyas
   b. the proof of the pramāṇas and our knowledge of the prameyas are mutually dependent

Nāgārjuna proceeds to investigate each of these alternatives in turn. (1a) The supposition that each of the pramāṇas is established by other pramāṇas leads to a vicious infinite regress:

> 32ab. If the proof of the pramāṇas were by means of other pramāṇas then there would be an infinite regress.
>
> If, further, you think that the establishment of the prameyas is by means of the pramāṇas [and] the establishment of these pramāṇas is by means of other pramāṇas, then an infinite regress follows. What fault is there in the consequence of an infinite regress?
>
> 32cd. There is no proof of the first, nor of the middle, nor of the last.
>
> The consequent infinite regress yields no proof of the first. For what reason? Just because here – the establishment of these pramāṇas by other pramāṇas, the establishment of those by others, . . . – there is no first [i.e., the expansion is infinite]. Because there is no first, how can there be a middle, how a last? Therefore your assertion, that the establishment of these pramāṇas is by means of other pramāṇas, is not proven.
>
> (VV v.32)

First, the regress is infinite because, whether we are speaking of individual instances of a pramāṇa or of a given pramāṇa taken generically, the probans may always be taken in turn as a probandum. Second, the regress is viciously infinite precisely because of this accumulation of probanda.

In general, neither the Naiyāyika nor the Buddhist is likely to be much impressed by the charge of infinite regress, for both allow that many such regresses are neither vicious nor absurd. Udayana's famous rejection of universal doubt in *Nyāyakusumāñjali* rests on the principle that while an infinite series of doubts is in principle possible, it could never be carried out, since the activity of doubting is possible only against the background of some area of certainty. (Nor is any Buddhist at all puzzled by the assertion that the chain of causes and conditions which result in the present suffering of some individual is without beginning). Here the case is different, however, for the Naiyāyika's opponent is not a sceptic.

The Naiyāyika is claiming, on this hypothesis, that a certain subset of the set of our cognitions forms a mutually consistent set the members of which give true knowledge of the nature of reality. The strategy of a sceptic would be to seek to throw into doubt as many as possible of the key nodes in this web of belief. Nāgārjuna does not employ this strategy. Instead he merely asks the Naiyāyika to complete the proof of his assertion by showing how it is that this web is tied to the structure of facts; and this the latter cannot do through the accumulation of *probanses*. As a realist the Naiyāyika is obliged, after he has demonstrated the mutual consistency of this subset of our cognitions, to demonstrate as well that these cognitions yield true knowledge of their objects, i.e., that they are pramāṇas. On this hypothesis, the Naiyāyika must be taken as assuming that both tasks are accomplished by the one demonstration, by exhibiting ever more instances where one *pramiti* (knowledge) is confirmed by another. This is why he is tempted to suppose that the accumulation of *probanses* is an accumulation of evidence, and thus that the regress is not vicious. This assumption is incorrect, however, and thus the regress is vicious, since the full force of the original *probandum* is transmitted undiluted to each subsequent *probans-cum-probandum*.

(1b) On this hypothesis there is no explicit proof of the pramāṇas because they require none. The pramāṇas are just those instruments which prove the natures of their respective objects. To ask for a proof of the pramāṇas is to treat them, illegitimately, as prameyas. Nāgārjuna rejects this position in the following passage.

> 33. [If you suppose that] their establishment is without pramāṇas your position is abandoned.
> There is inequality [of treatment] here, and the reason for the difference should be stated.
>
> If you think that the establishment of those pramāṇas is without pramāṇas, but the establishment of the prameyas is by means of the pramāṇas, if so then your doctrine, that the establishment of the objects is by means of the pramāṇas, is abandoned. There is an inequality, viz., the establishment of some objects is by means of the pramāṇas, that of some not. And you should state the reason for the difference, the reason for saying that the establishment of some objects is by means of pramāṇas, that of some not. And this is not indicated. Therefore this hypothesis is unproven.
>
> (VV v.33)

His argument is essentially this, that one can maintain this position only if one has no theory of the pramāṇas whatsoever. Since this position is itself a kind of theory of the pramāṇas, it seems that it cannot itself be maintained. In any event the Naiyāyika would want to do far more than just assert (1b); his is a full-fledged theory of the pramāṇas, which gives their number, defining character-

istics, respective prameyas, etc. To have such a theory of pramāṇas is necessarily to treat pramāṇas as objects (artha) of knowledge. Hypothesis (1b) then comes into conflict with a principle which underlies this enterprise, that the nature of an object is correctly ascertained only by means of some accredited pramāṇa. If this principle is simply abandoned, the enterprise becomes pointless. On the other hand it is difficult to make out any possible justification for excluding the pramāṇas from the scope of this principle. Such a justification could be offered only if it could be shown that there is some relevant difference between the pramāṇas and their prameyas such that while pramāṇas are arthas, they are not to be taken as prameyas; and this can be shown only if it is possible to have correct knowledge of the nature of the pramāṇas. Thus hypothesis (1b) must be dismissed as unintelligible.

(1c) On this hypothesis, an individual instance of a pramāṇa, e.g., a perception, establishes both the nature of its prameya and its own validity as a means of apprehending the prameya. A pramāṇa is said to be self-validating in just the way that a fire or lamp is said to be self-illuminating.[4] As we shall see below, Gautama himself may have held this position. Nāgārjuna devotes six ślokas to the consideration of this position, and throughout he concerns himself solely with the case of fire. We must suppose him to employ this procedure because the opponent has provided fire as a *sapakṣa* for his argument. Nāgārjuna is then seeking to show that fire does not have the requisite properties to serve as sapakṣa, and thus that in all cases other than that of the pramāṇas the rule holds good that an instrument cannot stand as the object of its own action.

Nāgārjuna gives several arguments against the thesis that fire illuminates itself as well as other things. The first is this: 'Just as previously a jar in darkness which is not illuminated by fire is not apprehended, then subsequently it is apprehended, being illuminated by fire, just so if it were the case that at a prior time fire were unilluminated, being in darkness, then later there were illumination of it by fire, then it would be the case that it illuminates itself. But this is not the case' (VV v.34). In general we are inclined to say that an object is capable of being illuminated only if it is also capable of being unilluminated, i.e., not visually perceptible but perceptible by means of some other sense. This cannot be said of fire (considered as in essence a source of illumination), for it is never the case that fire is not visually perceptible but perceptible by means of some other sense. As Nāgārjuna points out in v.37, it would be absurd to say that there is ever darkness in fire, yet this would seem to follow from the claim that fire is self-illuminating.

The opponent now tries a new strategy: He concedes that there is no darkness in a fire which has arisen, but resists the conclusion that fire does not illuminate itself; 'for', he says, 'a fire which is in the process of arising (utpadyamāna) illuminates both itself and what is other than itself' (VV v.37). The supposition is that there is at least one *kṣana* (moment) during which fire and darkness coexist in the same locus, namely that *kṣana* during which fire is in the process of originating. To this Nāgārjuna replies that in this case fire will not at all illuminate.

On this hypothesis, 'a fire which is in the process of arising does not extend to (*pra* √ *ap*) darkness, and because darkness is not reached, it is not destroyed; there is no illumination because darkness is not destroyed' (VV v.38). We could make out a case for the coexistence of fire and darkness in the same locus if we could say that fire, at the moment of its origination, does not destroy any darkness because it is as yet unextended and hence has not come into contact with any darkness. The consequences of this supposition are dire, however, for then it seems that fire will not be capable of illumination at any subsequent moment. There is no reason to suppose that an entity which at its moment of origination is incapable of illuminating anything – either itself or the other – will at any later time be able to illuminate anything without assistance. If fire is by definition just a source of illumination, then it is a condition of our saying that fire exists that we be able to say that it is illuminating something.

If the opponent seeks to avoid this objection by supposing that an as yet unextended fire destroys darkness, another absurdity will result. 'If you suppose that an unextended fire destroys darkness, why should not a fire which is standing here destroy darkness which occurs in all parts of the world?' (VV v.39) If light which has not come into contact with some darknes is nonetheless capable of destroying that darkness, then one source of illumination would suffice to light the world.

(1a–c) Nāgārjuna next states a general objection to the thesis that the pramāṇas are capable of intrinsic proof. The text mentions only the case of fire (1c), but the argument applies to (1a) and (1b) as well. He first makes explicit the fact that in such a proof there is no mention of the prameyas. 'If you think that, like fire, the proof of the pramāṇas is intrinsic, then the establishment of the pramāṇas is independent of the prameyas, the objects of knowledge. For what reason? An intrinsic proof does not require another. For if it requires [another], it is not an intrinsic proof' (VV v.40). In response to the opponent's question, why this should be considered a defect, Nāgārjuna states, 'If the establishment of the pramāṇas is independent of the prameyas, then the various pramāṇas will not be the pramāṇas of anything whatever. This is the fault. If the pramāṇas are indeed pramāṇas of something, they are not independent of prameyas' (VV v.41). His claim is that if certain kinds of cognition were proven to be pramāṇas without reference to their objects, the prameyas, then this could not count as proof that these are *pramāṇas*, that is, valid means of acquiring knowledge of their prameyas. That this is so can be seen from the following. Various kinds of cognition come to mind as candidates for the role of pramāṇa. How are we to decide which among these are in fact pramāṇas, that is, give independent knowledge of the nature of their objects? Suppose that certain types of cognition all share some property in virtue of which we want to say that these are self-validating. If this is the property of being self-illuminating, it is not out of place to ask why possession of this property should qualify some type of cognition as a valid means of knowledge. And this question is properly answered only when

it is demonstrated that all and only those types of cognition are self-illuminating which give independent knowledge of the nature of their object. In this case, however, this proof of the pramāṇas may no longer be called 'intrinsic' in the present sense. A similar argument can also be made if the chosen property is that of being a member of a mutually consistent set, or of being what is called a pramāṇa. In general a proof of the pramāṇas, i.e., a demonstration that certain classes of cognition are valid means of attaining knowledge of the objects of cognition, is impossible if the proof does not make reference to those objects of cognition.

(2) On this hypothesis, that the pramāṇas are proven extrinsically (parataḥ), the proof of the pramāṇas is dependent on the prameyas. That is, we show that certain types of cognition are pramāṇas by showing that just those types of cognition yield independent knowledge of the nature of the cognizables. Nāgārjuna recognizes two versions of this hypothesis: (2a) We are already in possession of knowledge of the nature of the prameyas, and this knowledge is employed in the proof of the pramāṇas; (2b) we show that certain types of cognition are pramāṇas by showing that they yield correct knowledge of the nature of the prameyas, and we attain knowledge of the prameyas through the exercise of the pramāṇas.

Hypothesis (2a) results in the defect known as siddhasādhana, 'proving what is proven'. 'If it is thought that the proof of the pramāṇas is dependent on the prameyas, then there is a proving of the four pramāṇas which are [already] proven. For what reason? Because there is no dependence on an unproven object. An unproven Devadatta requires nothing' (VV v.42). On this assumption the proof of the pramāṇas employs previously ascertained knowledge of the prameyas; and since such ascertainment requires the use of the pramāṇas, we must already know which are the pramāṇas. Hence our proof is superfluous.

Nāgārjuna goes on to point out that this general strategy will work only if we suppose that the nature of the prameyas is ascertained without the use of the pramāṇas (v.43). This gives rise to a new objection, that since the pramāṇas are then superfluous, there is no point in trying to establish them. 'If you suppose that the establishment of the prameyas is independent of the pramāṇas, then what good is there in your proof of the pramāṇas which you seek? For that which is the object which those pramāṇas would intend, viz., the prameyas, they are [already] proven without the pramāṇas' (VV v.44). This difficulty might be solved, within the boundaries of (2a), only by transposing pramāṇa and prameya; but in this case all our old difficulties concerning the proof of the pramāṇas will attach themselves to the proof of the prameyas.

(2b) This hypothesis results in the defect known as unproven reason (*kāraṇasya asiddhi*), and leaves both pramāṇa and prameya unproven. The claim here would seem to be that pramāṇas and prameyas mutually prove one another, that is, knowledge of the nature of objects of cognition helps us determine which are the valid means of cognition, and knowledge of the valid means of cognition

helps us determine the nature of the objects of cognition. On the face of it such a procedure seems to be viciously circular, and this is just Nāgārjuna's complaint. He argues that neither the prameyas (v.47) nor the pramāṇas (v.48) may then be taken to prove anything, thus neither side of the mutual proof goes through.

We are inclined to suspect Nāgārjuna's procedure here, for hypothesis (2b) does not seem all that implausible if construed in a more charitable fashion. The position we might wish to defend is this: We come to distinguish between valid and invalid types of cognition when we come to realize that certain types of cognition regularly result, when acted upon, in unsuccessful practice. Here our knowledge that a certain instance of behavior is unsuccessful, has not achieved its goal, is dependent on our employment of some means of cognition. This does not ultimately vitiate our procedure, however, for as our program proceeds we exclude from our methods of ascertaining the consequences of our behavior those types of cognition which have been found to regularly lead to unsuccessful practice. Ideally such a program should never result in our being confronted with a conflict between a cognition acquired by means of one of the non-falsified means of cognition and a cognition of the result of behavior based on the former cognition which is likewise acquired by means of one of the non-falsified means of cognition. In this case it would seem reasonable to say that we have established the pramāṇas, that is, determined their number, defining characteristics, respective objects, etc., and that the establishment of the pramāṇas and the establishment of the prameyas are mutually dependent.

Several observations are in order concerning this position. First, it is clear that this is at best an indirect proof of the pramāṇas, for the procedure it recommends is primarily one of falsification. What is sought is some mutually consistent set of judgments concerning the nature of the objects of cognition and the results of instances of practice which proceed from the former type of judgment. Once we have obtained such a set, we are to investigate the nature of the types of cognition by means of which we arrived at these judgments. A theory of pramāṇas may then be constructed on the basis of these investigations. (It is interesting to note that this program will succeed only if our set of mutually consistent judgments contains some which were arrived at through inductive inference.) We arrive at this mutually consistent set, however, only by excluding those judgments which are falsified by subsequent practice. What must be pointed out is that it is of the nature of falsification that it requires some initial set of judgments which we are loath to abandon; for otherwise we shall hardly know which of two conflicting judgments should be rejected. It might be thought that this requirement could be met in Nyāya through the notion of a familiar case (abhyāsadaśāpanna).[5] Quite apart from the difficulties involved in trying to give a precise formulation of this notion, however, there is the problem of the status of our stock of familiar cases. Let us suppose that we take over from the world of common sense some set of judgments which are ordinarily felt to require no further justification (e.g., 'I have two hands'). We employ these in initiating our falsification procedure, and thus both our set of mutually

consistent judgments and our ultimate characterization of the pramāṇas are arrived at in dependence on this set of (ordinarily) unquestioned judgments. The question now arises, what are we to do if subsequent deliberations based on our resultant theory of the pramāṇas throw into question our stock of initially unquestioned judgments? The best we could hope for in such a situation is piecemeal reform; hence Neurath's 'ship of knowledge', and Wittgenstein's simile of the bed of a stream whose course changes over time. The point here is not that wholesale rejection of our ordinarily unquestioned judgments is particularly likely to occur. Rather, the importance of these considerations is in what they show about the nature of this type of proof of the pramāṇas – that it is inherently probabilistic, and in direct conflict with a straightforward epistemological realism.

The first point is fairly clear, but the second may require elaboration. The realist wishes his defense of the pramāṇas to show not only that there are pramāṇas of a certain number and nature, but also that these pramāṇas give us knowledge of the nature of independently existing reals. (In fact, it is just this which underlies the dispute between the Naiyāyika and the Mādhyamika, for the former believes the latter's denial of self-existent reals to be incompatible with any knowledge claim on the basis of which such a denial might be based.) A theory of pramāṇas which emerged from the procedure outlined above could not be realistic in this straightforward manner. This is already clear from the fact that the proof procedure is indirect, relying primarily on falsification. This means that the proof will proceed through the use of counterfactual conditionals (of the form 'If cognition j_1 were the result of a pramāṇa, it would not conflict with the well-confirmed cognition j_2'), and thus will be a kind of tarka, which the Naiyāyikas rightly exclude from the scope of their term 'pramāṇa'.[6] This leads to the embarrassment that a theory of the pramāṇas cannot be constructed or defended solely on the basis of the pramāṇas. The important point, however, is that since at no point in our proof is there appeal to any facts other than those concerning logical relations among cognitions, we cannot legitimately include in the resultant theory of the pramāṇas the claim that they yield direct knowledge of their objects.

The same consequence follows from the fact that this strategy requires us to begin with some stock of ordinarily unquestioned judgments. Even if there should never arise the need for subsequent refinement of these judgments, there is still the possibility that the initial choice of some other set of ordinarily unquestioned judgments would have resulted in a different theory of pramāṇas which would likewise be uncontradicted by the results of practice. Since the task of ruling out all these alternative theories would be infinite and thus uncompleteable, we must accept the possibility that there are mutually incompatible theories all of which satisfy our initial requirements. This is a dire consequence for the direct realist, however, for it entails the conclusion that our knowledge of the nature of the objects of cognition is relative to the theory of knowledge within which we are operating. If alternative accounts of the pramāṇas are indeed

possible, then such knowledge of objects must be at least in part determined by the system, not the nature of the objects.

For all these reasons, then, a Naiyāyika should find unacceptable this sort of defense of the claim that pramāṇas and prameyas mutually establish one another. He would be loath to accept the probabilistic nature of the resultant theory of pramāṇas, since Nyāya fallibilism would not seem to extend into the heart of the system itself. And such a defense would be in direct conflict with a fundamental tenet of his system, epistemological realism. Thus Nāgārjuna cannot be faulted for failing to consider this possible interpretation of hypothesis (2b); not only was this position not held by any of his actual opponents, a theory of this type could not lead to the sort of objection to the Madhyạmaka position to which he is here responding.

What, then, does Nāgārjuna mean by his statement that there are no pramāṇas? He is clearly saying more than that a coherent theory of pramāṇas had yet to be formulated, since he argues against positions which were not held by any of his opponents. Yet if we understand by 'pramāṇa' a means of arriving at beliefs which it would be reasonable to hold, then Nāgārjuna's position would indeed be odd, since his arguments do after all appeal to our rationality, yet on this reading there would be no beliefs which it would be rational to hold. There are, I believe, but two alternatives open to us here. The first is to interpret Nāgārjuna after the manner of Śaṅkara – as employing what are by common consent taken to be pramāṇas in order to bring us to the insight that these are ultimately invalid, in that their employment inevitably leads to contradiction, and that reality as such is ineffable and not discursively apprehendable. We may, on the other hand, take Nāgārjuna to be making a somewhat more limited claim – that the epistemological enterprise, *as conceived by the Naiyāyikas*, cannot be carried to completion. On this interpretation the problem lies not in the notion of pramāṇa as such, but in the notion of a pramāṇa as a means of attaining a true characterization of a set of independently existing reals. I might add that we may link these two readings of Nāgārjuna's position here in VV with two different conceptions of his aim in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikas*: On the first conception, he is there seeking to show that the ultimate nature of reality cannot be adequately characterizéd; on the second conception, his arguments are meant to demonstrate that the phrase 'the ultimate nature of reality' is a non-denoting expression.

How are we to decide between these two interpretations of Nāgārjuna's statement that there are no pramāṇas? It is clear that if his arguments succeed, they support only the second, weaker claim.[7] If these arguments are sound, they show only that a theory of pramāṇas cannot be employed in defense of some metaphysical thesis, insofar as such a theory cannot be constructed independently of some set of presuppositions concerning the nature of the objects of knowledge. His arguments certainly do not show that we are unreasonable in, e.g., relying on perception in carrying out our everyday transactions, that such behavior leads to ineluctable contradictions, let alone that reality cannot be known discursively.

All he has shown is that we cannot regiment our common-sense intuitions concerning ways of arriving at justified belief in such a way as to lend credence to some one or another metaphysical thesis. If Nāgārjuna means to do more than this, he has failed. I argue elsewhere that his task in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikas* is not to show the impossibility of characterizing the Absolute, but rather to show the non-denoting character of the expression 'the ultimate nature of reality'. If this is correct, then there is no reason to believe that Nāgārjuna here wishes to establish more than the weaker claim. Finally, we shall see in the sequel that Candrakīrti quite explicitly argues for this weaker reading of the claim. Thus there is little reason to suppose that Nāgārjuna means to deny the possibility of there being pramāṇas in any sense of the term.

II

Gautama and Vātsyāyana both responded to Madhyamaka criticisms of the Nyāya enterprise.[8] In the context of his discussion (NS II.1.8–20), Gautama refers to arguments which are not to be found in the well-known texts of Nāgārjuna's, e.g. the argument of the three times (vv.8–11). It is possible that both the NS passage and VV represent refinements of an earlier debate, but it is difficult to say in the absence of any definitive means of establishing the chronology of these texts. (Āryadeva does, however, give an argument in Ch. V of *Śataśāstra* which is similar to the argument of the three times discussed by Gautama.) Gautama goes on to attack the Mādhyamika for presenting an argument against the existence of pramāṇas, on the grounds that such an argument is self-stultifying (II.1.12–14). We shall consider this objection when we examine Candrakīrti's critique of epistemology. The Nyāya response proper to Nāgārjuna's arguments begins at II.1.16. Vātsyāyana starts out by asserting that one and the same entity may be both a pramāṇa and a prameya. Gautama supplies us with the analogy of a weigh (*tulā*) which serves as a measuring instrument when it is used to weight other objects, but which may also stand as an object of measurement, namely when its own accuracy is determined by testing it against some other weight (II.1.16).[9] Vātsyāyana, in commenting on this verse, tells us first that this is true of all the categories (tantrārtha). From the examples he gives (ātman and buddhi), it seems he has in mind the list of prameyas given at NS I.1.9. Thus the self may be considered a pramāṇa in that 'it is the independent owner of an act of cognition'. It is not clear, however, that he wants to claim more than that the pramāṇas may occur as prameyas.

Vātsyāyana seeks to bolster this claim by considering the nature of a kāraka, a grammatical case or the notion expressed through the use of such a case. His argument would seem to be in anticipation of an objection which is formulated by Candrakīrti, to the effect that a pramāṇa must bear the nature of what is expressed through the instrumental case (karaṇa). Vātsyāyana shows that through the choice of suitable verbs ('standing', 'seeing', 'showing', 'sprinkling', 'falling', 'sitting'), one and the same term, 'tree', may take any of the

following cases: nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, locative. He then asserts that to be a particular kāraka is not to be the substance or activity which is expressed by the word in that case, but rather to be a particular sort of condition for the principal activity which is expressed by the verb of the sentence, e.g., for the nominative case it is to be 'the independent condition of the activity'. The point here seems to be this, that the notion conveyed by a case-ending is distinct from the substance or activity expressed by terms which stereotypically occur in that case. Thus while the notion of a pramāṇa is properly expressed by the instrumental as used with verbs of cognition, this by no means prevents those substances and activities expressed by terms occuring in this instrumental of cognition from being expressed in other cases as well, especially in the accusative of verbs of cognition. Thus grammatical considerations would seem to bear out the claim that one and the same thing may be both pramāṇa and prameya.

Vātsyāyana represents the opponents as accepting this point, that a cognitive instrument may on occasion be itself an object of cognition, as in, 'I am apprehending this by perception', or, 'My knowledge is perceptual'. Such cases must, however, be distinguished from the case where we seek to give the defining characteristics of the pramāṇas. In the latter case we must ask what means of cognition are to be employed in such an enterprise. In II.1.17–18, Gautama proposes two alternative answers to this question, both rejected by the opponent. The first is that the definitions of the pramāṇas are discovered through the use of some pramāṇa other than that being defined. This is rejected on the grounds that it must lead to the positing of some pramāṇa other than the accepted four; Vātsyāyana adds that it also leads to a vicious infinite regress. The second alternative is that the definitions of the pramāṇas are known without the use of any pramāṇas. This is rejected on the grounds that we should then be able to apprehend the prameyas as well without the use of any pramāṇas.

It is at this point (II.1.19) that Gautama introduces the analogy of the establishment of the light of a lamp. Kamaleswar Bhattacharya[10] and Tucci[11] understand him to mean that the pramāṇas are self-validating in the sense of hypothesis (1c) of VV. That Gautama introduces this analogy here, immediately after the opponent has rejected two alternative explanations of how certain classes of cognition might be known to be pramāṇas, lends plausibility to this supposition.

Vātsyāyana, however, takes Gautama to be saying something quite different. He understands this to be not the assertion that the pramāṇas establish both themselves and their objects, as the light illuminates itself and the object, but rather the assertion that just as the light of a lamp may be on separate occasions both pramāṇa and prameya, so the four pramāṇas may themselves be prameyas, that is, be apprehended by themselves. His argument for this assertion seems, on the face of it, odd, and we shall examine it in some detail to see if it is possible to make out just what he is saying.

Vātsyāyana begins by asserting that the light of a lamp is a pramāṇa, since it

functions as an instrument in the perception of a visual object. Chandrodaya Bhattacharya claims[12] that Vātsyāyana both here and at NSB II.1.16 extends the scope of 'pramāṇa' beyond Gautama's intended meaning. In the latter passage, however, Vātsyāyana appears only to want to show that a pramāṇa may itself be a prameya, not that 'almost everything on earth may be both a pramāṇa and a prameya'. And in the present instance Vātsyāyana has a precedent for referring to light as a pramāṇa, for Gautama has already called a weight a pramāṇa in II.1.16. In any event, this extension of the term beyond its more narrow technical usage plays no part in the subsequent argument, the case of light apparently being intended merely as an illustrative example.

Vātsyāyana goes on to assert that the light of a lamp is also a prameya, citing instances of its apprehension through three pramāṇas: perception, inference, and verbal testimony. His contention that light is directly perceived through contact with the eye is questionable, or at least would be questioned by an Ābhidharmika, who recognizes as visual data just color and shape (Sarvāstivāda) or color alone (Theravāda and Sautrāntika); but this issue is not material to our investigation.

Vātsyāyana's argument proper begins with his claim that, as with light, so too the pramāṇas are apprehended by the pramāṇas themselves, i.e., stand as their own prameyas. His proof of this assertion is puzzling. He notes (a) that the senses are inferred through the apprehension of their object, (b) that the objects of the sense are apprehended in perception, (c) that sense-object conjunction (sannikarṣa) is inferred through the mark of obstruction (i.e., through the absence of perception when there is obstruction between sense and object), and (d) that the cognition which arises from sense-object conjunction is apprehended 'because of the particular contact of self with manas, and because of the inherence [of cognition] in the self, as with pleasure'. Vātsyāyana clearly has in mind the first part of Gautama's definition of perception, which in its entirety states that perception is a cognition which (1) results from sense-object conjunction, (2) is inexpressible, (3) does not wander, and (4) is well-defined. Two questions immediately arise concerning this argument. First, why the ablative in the account of the apprehension of a perceptual cognition, (d)? And second, why should Vātsyāyana believe that he has hereby shown that perception is apprehended by the pramāṇas?

It will be noticed that whereas in (a), (b) and (c) we are given accounts of how we may come to know three components of the definition of perception, in (d) we are told not how the fourth component, a cognition of a certain sort, may be known, but why it occurs, i.e., its causal antecedents: contact of manas and self, and inherence in the self. Does Vātsyāyana mean to suggest that when these conditions are fulfilled, a cognition is apprehended? This would seem to imply that when one perceives, one apprehends not just the object perceived, but the cognition by which the object is perceived as well. It is well known that the Naiyāyikas reject such an account of cognition, which is put forward by, among other schools, the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika. Yet it is difficult to know what else to

make of this statement, since Vātsyāyana is seeking to demonstrate that all the components of the definition of perception may be apprehended by one or another pramāṇa, and he here asserts no more than that the cognition is apprehended due to the causal conditions which are responsible for its occurrence. Thus we can only suppose him to be saying that the occurrence and the apprehension of a cognition are one and the same event. This is all the more baffling in that we would have expected him to invoke *anuvyavasāya* in explaining how we come to know the perceptual cognition. *Anuvyavasāya* is a kind of introspective cognition which takes an immediately preceding cognition as its object; it represents the Nyāya alternative to the claim that a cognition cognizes both its object and itself. As such, it is meant to account for our ability to make such assertions as 'I perceive that it is blue', in addition to such assertions as 'It is blue'. The former sort of assertion would seem to be the only one which could qualify, within the Nyāya system, as the report of the apprehension of perceptual cognitions. That Vātsyāyana does not make use of this device in (d) is baffling, but it can only be thought of as a lapse on his part, and not as a weakness of the Nyāya position in the present debate.

A more pressing question is why Vātsyāyana should think that, having shown that each of the four components of clause (1) of the definition of perception may be apprehended by means of one or another pramāṇa, he has shown that the pramāṇa perception is apprehensible by the pramāṇas. It is known that later Naiyāyikas, such as Jayanta, define a pramāṇa as a collection of the conditions responsible for the production of a true cognition. A pramāṇa is a collection or aggregate of these conditions, and not a whole which is made up of these conditions as parts. This point is brought out in the controversy with the Mimāṃsākas, who conceive of a cognition as a motion and thus argue that the pramāṇa is a motion. If a pramāṇa is an aggregate or collection, however, and not a whole, then Vātsyāyana cannot bring to the defense of his claim that the pramāṇa is apprehended in the apprehension of its components, the Nyāya doctrine that we apprehend the whole in the apprehension of its parts. But some such defense is clearly required, for so far all that Vātsyāyana has shown is that we apprehend the senses, the object, the conjunction of sense and object, and the cognition which results from sense-object conjunction; he has yet to show that we ever apprehend a cognition which is known to result from the known conjunction of a known sense and a known object. One can, for instance, know that *aRb*, and know that *p*, and not know that *aRb* is the cause of *p*. This defect is easily remedied, for it would not seem implausible to claim that all the components of the definition can be known to stand in the requisite relations in a particular instance of perceptual cognition. This lapse is of interest, however, as an indication of Nyāya extensionalism, about which we shall have more to say below.

Vātsyāyana next considers the objection that a pramāṇa cannot be said to apprehend itself because something can be apprehended only by something else, not by itself. Vātsyāyana agrees with the force of this objection, but points out

that a large number of distinct entities are included under the general definitions of perception etc. Thus to say that, e.g., perception is apprehended by a pramāṇa is to say no more than that particular instances of perception are apprehended by other instances of some pramāṇa. It is not to say that one instance of perception apprehends itself.

From the nature of the *sapakṣa* which Vātsyāyana cites, however, it would seem that this assertion is not as innocent as it might appear. He gives the case of apprehending the water in a tank by apprehending an extracted sample. It is not clear just how this should be taken, but it would appear that Vātsyāyana is appealing to a peculiar feature of the Nyāya doctrine of universals (sāmānya). A universal, it is claimed, is known by perception. When we perceive a pot, we also perceive the potness which inheres in the pot; when we perceive the brown of the pot, we also perceive the brownness which inheres in this brown. And since a universal inheres in all of its instances, when we perceive the potness of the pot, we thereby perceive all pots insofar as they are inhered in by potness. Thus when we perceive the water which we have extracted from the tank, we thereby perceive the waterness of the water remaining in the tank, and thus the latter water as well. (Similarly, if we perceive that our sample is sweet, we perceive the sweetness of the water in the tank as well.) There is an important restriction on this claim, viz., that the information which we obtain concerning non-present individuals through the perception of a present individual does not exceed the content of the universal itself, and thus does not extend to peculiarities of situation, etc. Nonetheless in the present instance, where we would want to say that we infer that the substance in the tank is water through our apprehension of the extracted sample, Vātsyāyana would want to say that we perceive that this substance is water.

The importance of this point lies in what it suggests about the status of Nyāya theoretical statements. The thesis that universals are directly perceived in the individuals in which they inhere may be thought of as a consequence of Nyāya direct realism; but it has extensionalist overtones as well, for it precludes the interpretation of universals as intensional entities. When we supplement this thesis with the Nyāya distinction between real universals (jāti) and pseudo-universals (upādhi), and note that one criterion of jāti-hood is that no two jātis may cover the same class of entities (i.e., a jāti is uniquely determined by its extension), we see that this is a full-fledged extensionalism. Further, since it is generally agreed within the system that universals exist only in the entities in which they inhere, (there is some controversy on this point, but that does not affect the present issue), it turns out that all universally and existentially quantified statements are in principle eliminable in favor of statements about individuals and their relations. Now in formulating the statements of their theory the Naiyāyikas use talk of universals in place of universal quantification. Thus extensionalism enters directly into the question of the status of these theoretical statements, for it then follows that any such statement is exhaustively analyzable into statements about the particular facts which are covered by the theoretical

statement. Thus the Nyāya theoretical structure does not contain anything which might be construed as a law, for there is entirely missing from these statements any sort of nomological necessity. (Indeed one good reason for considering Nyāya extensionalist is that its logic and epistemology contain no treatment of the alethic modalities – and this not because the opportunity for such treatment never arose.) This fact has two important consequences for our understanding of Vātsyāyana's argument. First, it shows why he is so concerned to demonstrate the possibility that particular occurrences of the pramāṇas may be apprehended by the pramāṇas. There can be no theory of knowledge without such apprehension, for this theory is not merely confirmed by the apprehension of particular instances, it is entirely reducible to the reports of particular cognitions of the requisite sort, cognitions which take other cognitions and their conditions as their objects. Second, this strongly suggests that Nyāya fallibilism must extend into the theoretical super-structure itself. It is well known that Nyāya embraces fallibilism at the level of particular empirical cognitions. If the truth-value of a theoretical statement is a function of the truth-values of statements concerning the covered instances, then it should be the case that any theoretical statement, including those made by the founders of the system, is itself falsifiable. We shall have more to say on this point below.

Vātsyāyana next points out that both the knower (i.e., the self) and manas may apprehend themselves. In support of the first assertion he cites such statements as 'I am happy', and 'I am unhappy'. Such knowledge-claims concern qualities which inhere in the self; but because in general qualities are known only through the apprehension of the substance in which they inhere, it must be the case that the self is known. And the self is, of course, also the substance in which knowledge inheres, and is thus the agent of the knowledge relation. Thus the knower knows itself. In defense of the second claim he cites NS I.1.16: 'The mark of manas is the non-production of simultaneous cognitions'. Here the existence of manas is inferred from the occurrence of a certain mark, and since contact between manas and the self is a necessary condition for the occurrence of any cognition, in the actual performance of this inference there is the apprehension of manas by manas. Thus it does not hold universally that what is apprehended and that by which it is apprehended must be distinct.

It is then objected that the knower and manas apprehend themselves only by means of the presence of some additional factor (nimittāntara), e.g., happiness in the case of the knower. To this Vātsyāyana replies that the same point applies as well to the case of the apprehension of the pramāṇas: A pramāṇa cannot be apprehended by a pramāṇa in the absence of some determinate factor by means of which the former is to be known. He goes on to point out that it would be absurd to conclude, for this or any other reason, that the pramāṇas cannot themselves be prameyas. This would involve the supposition that there is some class of entities which is not the object of any of the four pramāṇas; but this supposition can be entertained only if we posit some new pramāṇa for the apprehension of this class of entities, for how are we to defend the claim that such entities

exist if not by specifying how they may be cognized? Since such a posit of a new pramāṇa 'cannot be proven by any means whatever', it follows that everything, whether a presence or an absence,[13] is an object of the four pramāṇas.

The remainder of the bhāṣya on II.1.19 is a refutation of the argument which Vātsyāyana takes to be mistaken interpretation of the sūtra – that the pramāṇas establish themselves just as light illuminates itself. His refutation in certain respects resembles that of Nāgārjuna in VV vv. 34–39. We shall leave off our explication of the bhāṣya at this point, however, since our concern is to assess Vātsyāyana's response to the Madhyamaka criticism.

Has he succeeded in demonstrating the tenability of the Nyāya conception of the epistemological enterprise? At first glance it would seem that he has not. Indeed we are inclined to say that Vātsyāyana has committed a *petitio principii*. He conflates two questions: whether the pramāṇas may be apprehended, and whether the pramāṇas, as determinate classes of cognition, may be shown to be *valid* means of cognition, that is, whether it may be demonstrated that their employment yields knowledge of their objects. Thus he supposes that an affirmative answer to the first question gives us grounds, for answering the second question in the affirmative as well. He takes this to be the case, we suppose, because he has begun with the assumption that the pramāṇas give knowledge of their objects; since, then, any instance of each of the four pramāṇas may be apprehended by at least one of the pramāṇas, we may know that these four types of cognition are valid means of knowledge. In apprehending a pramāṇa, we attain knowledge not only of the definition and the proper object of that pramāṇa, but also of its pramāṇatva, the fact that it is a means of attaining true knowledge of its object.

On this interpretation, Vātsyāyana has simply missed the thrust of the Madhyamaka critique. The question at the heart of that critique is just this; What is the epistemic status of those statements which comprise the theory of knowledge? Take, for instance, the assertion that perception, that is, that cognition which results from sense-object conjunction, does not wander, etc., is a valid means of obtaining knowledge of perceptible objects. How is this statement known to be true? If it is claimed that this statement is known to be true through the apprehension of perception by perception, then we shall reply that the question has been begged. If it is claimed that this statement is known to be true through the apprehension of perception by some other pramāṇa, then either the *petitio principii* will occur at the end of the series of justifications, or if there is no end to this series there will be a vicious infinite regress. The question will not be begged only if we can find some theory-neutral standpoint from which to assess statements concerning possible candidates for the role of pramāṇa. Unfortunately, no knowledge of the pramāṇas can result from the adoption of such a standpoint, since the sort of theory-neutrality which is required here precludes the employment of any means of knowledge It would seem that epistemology, at least as conceived by the Naiyāyikas, is an impossibility.

A rather different evaluation of Vātsyāyana's defense of this enterprise

emerges, however, when we consider it in the light of Nyāya extensionalism. On this reading, Vātsyāyana has good grounds for refusing to consider the question apparently posed by the Mādhyamika critic, the question of the ultimate justification of the theoretical statements of epistemology. On the extensionalist reading, all such statements are exhaustively analyzable into statements concerning particular instances. In this case, the confirmation of our theoretical statements can only come about through particular cognitions which confirm or falsify other particular instances of cognition. And when we so reduce our theoretical statements to the far more mundane-looking statements concerning concrete cases of cognition, it should be evident that here confirmation and falsification can occur only through the actual employment of pramāṇas. Those singular propositions which make up the extension of a theoretical statement of epistemology are verified in precisely the same way in which singular propositions concerning other matters of empirical fact are verified. That such verification must always be piecemeal and tentative does not vitiate the epistemological project. It could only if there were available some alternative means of assessing the statements which make up the theory of knowledge, some way of arriving at an ultimate justification; but on Nyāya extensionalism there cannot be. In short, Nyāya epistemology is to be taken as nothing more than a description of our actual epistemic practices. As such, its claims are always open to revision – provided, of course, that concrete evidence can be adduced which shows that a claim does deviate from our practice. The critic's question concerning the epistemic status of the theory of knowledge is mistaken; it has no separate epistemic status, for it does not stand as the foundation of the possibility of our knowledge of objects.

The actual defense of Nyāya epistemology will then consist of two parts, of which Vāṭsyāyana presents only the first. This is the argument that pramāṇas may occur as prameyas, i.e., take themselves as their own objects. This point must be demonstrated in order to show that it is possible to arrive at knowledge of the nature of cognitions – their division into classes, the defining characteristics of these classes, the respective objects of each class, etc. The second part of the defense of Nyāya epistemology is the analysis of the notion of validation. In order to show that certain classes of cognition are pramāṇas, it must be shown that these types of cognition regularly result in correct judgments concerning their objects. Thus a discussion of how we go about validating particular cognitions is called for. Vātsyāyana is remiss in not providing such a discussion in the present context, although he may well have felt that the subject was sufficiently non-controversial as to require no comment. If I should judge that a pot is on the floor, I am clearly capable of determining, should the need arise, whether the judgment is true or false, whether it corresponds or does not correspond to the facts. Countless instances of such validation procedures may be cited from ordinary life.

Nonetheless later Nyāya authors felt compelled to discuss the nature of validation, in part to counter the claims of other schools that cognitions are self-

validating. It is generally agreed that the criterion of truth is successful practice: A cognition is known to be true if practice based on the assumption of its truth results in the attainment of the desired end. In this case we should expect the validation of a particular cognition to involve the elements of practice, cognition of the results of practice, and the comparison of attained results with the original cognition. If I judge that the substance before me is water and subsequently wish to confirm this judgment, I may drink the substance. If I then judge that my thirst has been quenched, I am in a position to confirm the initial cognition by noting its agreement with the subsequent cognition by way of the fact that one property of water is that it quenches thirst.

Udayana's account of the process of validation is somewhat different;[14] he bases it on cognition, via memory, of vyāpti (invariable concomitance), but does not bring in successful practice. What he seems to have in mind is a situation like the following: I am not sure whether what I initially perceived as water is in fact water, or rather a mirage. Rather than test my cognition through practice, I notice that my initial cognition was not of something which wavers, and reflect that mirages invariably waver, while water invariably does not waver. I then conclude, through a subsequent cognition, that my initial cognition was correct.

What we seem to have here are accounts of two distinct types of validation, instances of both of which abound in our everyday epistmic practices. Nor are the two types radically different, since knowledge of vyāpti comes into play in the first type (e.g., when we make use of the assertion that water quenches thirst). It would appear that the first type carries more weight than the second, but in a large number of cases we proceed no further than the use of the second type of validation. In any event, there are two noteworthy points about these accounts of the process of validation. The first is that this process clearly involves the apprehension of cognitions by cognitions. Thus Vātsyāyana's argument for the claim that pramāṇas may assume the status of prameyas is important not only because it demonstrates the possibility of characterizing classes of cognitions, but also because were this impossible, there could be no validation of particular cognitions and thus no way of determining which of the classes of cognitions are pramāṇas.

The second point is that since on this picture the validation of a cognition requires the use of some means of knowledge, it must be assumed that certain types of cognition are at least regularly trustworthy. Can the critic not then repeat his charges of infinite regress and *petitio principii*? We may respond to the first charge along the lines of Vācaspati, who appeals to our actual practice when confronted with doubts about the validity of particular cognitions. While it seems that we might likewise doubt the validity of that subsequent cognition whereby we sought to confirm the original cognition, and so on *ad infinitem*, we find that in practice this is never the case. While instances of doubt about an original cognition are not infrequent, instances of doubt about confirmatory cognition$_1$ are relatively rare, of doubt about confirmatory cognition$_2$ still rarer, and about confirmatory cognition$_3$ all but non-existent. Not only can an actual

infinity of confirmatory cognitions never be carried out, we are always satisfied with a relatively small number.

As for the second charge, that an appeal to the procedures which we use to validate particular cognitions begs the question which is at issue between the epistemologist and his critic, we may reply to this charge by pointing out that this question, how we are to decide which are the valid means of cognition, simply does not arise unless there is the possibility both of doubt concerning the reliability of particular cognitions and of the removal of such doubt. To put the point in more modern terms, the institution of doubting makes no sense except against the background of some area of certainty. This means that in order for doubt to occur, we must already be in possession of some relatively trustworthy means of attaining knowledge. Further, these means of attaining knowledge must be such as to allow, given suitable refinements, the satisfactory disposition of ordinarily occurring types of doubt. Given that we do distinguish between true and false cognitions, it must be the case that: (1) we sometimes doubt the reliability of certain of our cognitions – which shows that we also have relatively reliable means of obtaining knowledge; and that (2) we have available to us means of resolving such doubts to our satisfaction (since otherwise the institution of doubting would be pointless) – which shows that our available means of knowledge are to be employed as well in task of validating particular cognitions. (Indeed the Nyāya theory of pramāṇas may be thought of as the philosophical regimentation of those intuitions which have arisen out of the performance of this task.) If the critic finds this response unsatisfactory, we would simply remind him that on the Nyāya understanding the theory of knowledge can only be a description of our actual epistemic practices.

We have presented two interpretations of Vātsyāyana's defense of the epistemological enterprise. On the first his defense fails, for it misses the point of the Madhyamaka critique; on the second it succeeds against a number of possible objections to the enterprise. I am not sure which of these best represents his intentions. The second, more satisfactory, explication of his defense is clearly in agreement with the views of the later Naiyāyikas. The question which we must now consider, however, is whether the second sort of defense would actually meet Nāgārjuna's objections. This question arises in part because, as we shall see in the sequel, Candrakīrti cites the Nyāya theory as a model description of our epistemic practices. This leads us to suspect that perhaps the second sort of defense likewise misses the point of the Madhyamaka objections. Here we would do well to recall the origins of the controversy. The Naiyāyika objects to the Mādhyamika's assertion that all things are empty, on the grounds that this can be asserted only if it has been ascertained through the use of pramāṇas, and if there are pramāṇas there must also be independently existing reals. On our understanding, the Mādhyamika's reply is that the metaphysical thesis that there are independently existing reals can be shown to follow from a theory of pramāṇas only if this theory can be constructed in such a way as to demonstrate the validity of the pramāṇas for attaining knowledge of independent reals

without employing any assumptions about the existence or nature of those reals; and this, he argues, cannot be done.

The defense of the Nyāya theory of knowledge which results from an extensionalist reading of that theory yields a picture of knowledge which is in many respects similar to contemporary nonfoundationalist accounts of knowledge. And like such accounts, what this picture gives us is at best a description of the sorts of ontological commitment which our epistemic practices require. What such a picture of the knowledge situation cannot support is the claim that any of the sorts of ontological commitment which these practices require corresponds to 'the ultimate nature of reality', the nature of independently existing reals. We may show that we are required to assume the existence of independent reals, of an objectively determined order; but to do this is not to demonstrate that there are reals, that there is such an order, independent of our epistemic practices. Indeed since the no-foundations view of knowledge tends to discourage questions about the ultimate justification' of our knowledge-claims, it ought as well to suggest that the phrase, 'the ultimate nature of reality' is a non-denoting expression. This means that if the Naiyāyikas do employ the defense of their enterprise sketched above, a reappraisal of their direct realism is called for. Direct realism now becomes a kind of empirical realism which is anything but incompatible with transcendental idealism. And since Nāgārjuna's śūnyavāda may, I believe, consistently be represented as a kind of semantic transcendental idealism, it would seem that the Nyāya defense of epistemology results in a theory of pramāṇas which cannot be used to refute the claim that all existents are empty.

Finally, a word is in order concerning some apparent conflicts between the extensionalist reading of Vātsyāyana's defense and our discussion of the 'charitable' interpretation of hypothesis (2b) at the end of Part I. It should be clear that the two arguments are similar in many respects. Two points require clarification. First, in our discussion of (2b) it was claimed that a Naiyāyika would be loath to accept one particular consequence of this hypothesis, that the statements of the Nyāya theory itself turn out to be falsifiable, while the extensionalist reading of Vātsyāyana's argument yields precisely this sort of universal fallibilism. Here we have a conflict between theory and practice. In practice the Naiyāyikas tend to treat their theoretical statements, especially as formulated in the sūtras of Gautama, as constituting a kind of *a priori*. I see no reason why this must be so, however, why Nyāya fallibilism cannot extend into the system itself. In fact it would seem that Vācaspati Miśra and Udayana come fairly close to this position.[15] We must remember that Indian epistemologists were not confronted with the phenomenon of regular advances in empirical knowledge, and so did not have the special impetus we do for considering the question of the nature and status of theories. If they had, the explicit adoption of a kind of universal fallibilism would certainly have been consistent with their epistemological principles. In particular it is to be noted that on Nyāya extensionalism the assertion of universal fallibilism does not generate any semantic paradoxes. Nonetheless I

suspect that such authors as Vātsyāyana would find this position disturbing, not least because it tends to bring out the compatibility of Nyāya epistemology and śūnyavāda.

The second point which requires clarification is this: In the discussion of (2b) I claimed that the procedure which I outlined required the use of falsification and thus *tarka*, which would be an undesirable consequence for Nyāya; yet in the procedure which I gave for constructing a defense of the theory of pramāṇas on pp. 329–31, falsification is not employed. Here the problem lies, I think, in the Nyāya tendency to conflate validation and verification or confirmation. The notion that validation can, and in certain cases must, occur through falsification, does not seem to have arisen in the Nyāya tradition. If the Naiyāyikas had come to believe that flasification is a necessary tool in the construction of a theory of pramāṇas, then they should have been required to rethink the question of the status of *tarka*, which was traditionally considered not to be a pramāṇa. Had all this happened, they might well have given us the first extensionalist analysis of counterfactuals.

Notes

1 The bulk of this paper was prepared during an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers on the topic of Indian logical and epistemological theories, which was held at the University of Okalahoma in June–August, 1979, under the direction of Prof. J. N. Mohanty. I wish to gratefully acknowledge the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the many helpful comments and criticisms made by Prof. Mohanty and the other participants in the seminar.

2 The same material has been investigated by Satkari Mookerji in "The Absolutist's Standpoint in Logic," Satkari Mookerji ed., *Nava-Nalanda-Mahavihara Research Publication*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Calcutta Private Press Ltd., 1957), pp. 1–175. While I am in substantial agreement with much of Mookerji's interpretation, many of his points require supplementation. Further, I think it is wrong to characterize the Madhyamikas as 'absolutists'.

3 The text of VV is to be found in: P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Madhyamakaśāstra of Nāgārjuna (Mūlamadhyamakakārikas) with the Commentary: Prasannapadā by Candrakīrti* (Dharbanga: Mithila Institute, 1960), pp. 277–295. A recent English translation is: "The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna (Translation of the 'Vigrahavyāvartanī from the Original Sanskrit with Introduction and Notes)," Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, trans., *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 217–261.

4 The case of fire, or more usually the light of a lamp, is often cited in connection with the debate over the question, whether a cognition is self-illuminating (svaprakāśa) or self-cognizing (svasamvedanā), or not. This debate is quite distinct from the present controversy, which concerns the question whether the pramanas are established or proven intrinsically or not.

5 For a discussion of abhyāsadaśāpanna, and references to relevant texts, cf.: J. N. Mohanty, *Gangeṣa's Theory of Truth* (Santinikhetan: Center of Advanced Study in Philosophy, 1966), pp. 52–4.

6 Because of the necessity of affirming, for the sake of argument, the false antecedent.

7 As was pointed out to me by William Maker in discussion, this claim is 'weaker' only within the context of epistemology. Its consequences for metaphysics are far stronger than those of the first claim.

8 The texts of both NS and NSB are to be found in: Padmaprasād Śāstri and Harirām Śukla, eds., *Nyāyadarśana of Gautama with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana*, Kashi Sanskrit Series, vol. 43 (Benares: Vidya Vilas Press, 1942).

9 Precisely the contrary view is represented by Wittgenstein's remarks on the standard metre. Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, 50.

10 "The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna," p. 240.

11 Giuseppe Tucci, ed. and trans., *Pre-Diṅnāga Buddhist Texts on Logic from Chinese Sources*, Gaekwad Oriental Series, vol. XLIX, "Notes on VV" pp. 36–7.

12 "The Philosophy of Nyāya," *Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy*, vol. VII, p. 69, n. 13.

13 Saccāsacca. I take this to refer to Kaṇāda's use of 'asat' (Vaiśeṣika Sūtra IX.1–12) for what later came to be recognized as the category of absence (abhāva). Kaṇāda's six categories would of course be 'sat'.

14 Karl Potter, ed., *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology*, The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 545.

15 Potter, pp. 67–8, 160.

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THE MADHYAMAKA CRITIQUE OF EPISTEMOLOGY – II

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In "The Madhyamaka Critique of Epistemology I"[1] (MCE I) I examined that portion of *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (VV) in which Nāgārjuna criticizes the Nyāya conception of the epistemological enterprise.[2] In the present paper we shall consider that portion of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*[3] in which the epistemology of Yogācāra-Sautrāntika (the school of Dignāga) is subjected to critical scrutiny. Candrakīrti's discussion divides roughly into three sections: (1) First (P.19.7–20.10) there is an examination of the epistemic status of such Madhyamaka statements as 'Existents are non-produced.' Here no Yogācāra-Sautrāntika assumptions are employed, so that this section may also be viewed as a reply to the Nyāya objection that the Madhyamaka critique of epistemology is self-stultifying. (2) Next (P.20.13–23.29) there is a discussion of the problems associated with the attempt at defining a pramāṇa. It will be recalled that Nāgārjuna employed an examination of these problems in order to undercut Nyāya objections to śūnyavāda (the doctrine of emptiness), arguing that Nyāya realism cannot be established by means of a theory of pramāṇas. Here Candrakīrti attempts to perform the same task on a Yogācāra-Sautrāntika defense of their ontology against Madhyamaka criticism, by investigating the lakṣaṇa-lakṣya (characteristic-characterized) relationship as it pertains to the task of defining the pramāṇas under Yogācāra-Sautrāntika assumptions. (3) Finally (P.24.1–25.28) Candrakīrti criticizes Dignāga's definition of perception. We shall examine each section in turn in some detail, hoping thereby to reach a better understanding both of Canadrakīrti's objections to Dignāga's system, and of the Madhyamaka attitude toward epistemology in general.

(1) It will be recalled that at *Nyāya Sūtra* (NS) II.1.13–14, Gotama argues that the Madhyamaka position on the pramāṇas is selfstultifying. This charge is leveled against the argument of the three times presented in NS II.1.8–11, but the difficulty which is here pointed out is quite general in nature: If the Mādhyamika means to deny the existence of pramāṇas, then either any statement

(vākya) which the Mādhyamika offers will not be supported by an accredited means of knowledge (in which case there seems to be no reason to believe it), or else if his statement is supported by some pramāṇa, then it must be shown why pramāṇas may be employed in defense of śūnyavāda but not otherwise.

A similar objection is introduced by the opponent at P.19.7. Here the statement in question – which is referred to by the opponent as a niścaya or conviction – is MMK I.3ab, 'Existents are non-produced.' Such a conviction must arise either through the use of pramāṇas or without their employment. Obviously the Mādhyamika will not want to grasp the first horn of the dilemma, since he claims that there are no pramāṇas. If he grasps the second horn, however, this has the following consequence:

> From which [grounds] this conviction of yours, that existents are non-produced, will arise, from those very [grounds] mine as well, that all existents are real, [will be proven]; and whatever is the case concerning this conviction of yours that all dharmas are non-produced, that will be true of mine as well, that there is the production of all existents. Thus your conviction, that all existents are non-produced, does not exist, hence on the grounds that it is useless to commence a śāstra because of the impossibility of instructing another of that of which you are uncertain, all uncontradicted existents are real.
>
> P.19.11–15.

If the Mādhyamika's 'conviction' is not supported by any accredited means of knowledge, then it would seem equally reasonable to hold its denial as well, namely the position of the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika (and the Naiyāyika as well), that all uncontradicted existents are real. Thus if śūnyavāda has the consequence that there are no pramāṇas, then the assertion of śūnyatā is self-stultifying in that it precludes the possibility of ruling out any number of statements which contradict the thesis of śūnyatā. Clearly, if we wish to maintain that all x's are A, we must be prepared to demonstrate that no x is non-A; and this the Mādhyamika is simply unable to do.

Candrakīrti replies to this objection as follows:

> We reply: If our conviction were somehow existing, it would be either born of pramāṇas or not born of pramāṇas. But it does not exist. Why? If a non-conviction were possible, the denial of that would be a conviction which is dependent on that. Hence as long as there is no non-conviction on our part, how could a conviction be a contradiction or non-contradiction of that, since there is non-dependence on another relatum, just like the shortness or length of the horns of an ass. There then being no existence of the conviction, for the purpose of establishing what do you imagine pramāṇas? How can there be number, defining characteristic, or object of these? Whether their

origination is from themselves, from others, from both, all this need not be said by us.

P.19.16–21.

Just what is meant by a 'non-conviction' (aniścaya)? We are reminded here of Nāgārjuna's statement (VV 30) that he neither affirms nor denies any thesis. We may then take 'aniścaya' to refer to any statement which is metaphysical in nature, i.e., is intended as a characterization of the ultimate nature of reality, and which contradicts the claim that all existents are empty. In this case Candrakīrti is claiming that there is no aniścaya which the Mādhyamika is called upon to refute. It is said to follow from this that the Mādhyamika is not required to employ pramāṇas in defense of śūnyavāda; for if there is no claim about the ultimate nature of reality which is the contradictory of the statement that all existents are empty, then the latter statement cannot be construed as a characterization of the real. Here we must suppose that a pramāṇa is thought of by the epistemologist as an instrument which is necessary for attaining knowledge of independent reals. Thus Candrakīrti's response is essentially this, that since the statement of śūnyavāda is not of the same logical type as its alleged contradictories (such as, 'Uncontradicted existents are real'), differing as it does from the latter by virtue of the fact that it ascribes no property to independently existing reals, its assertion is not vitiated by the fact that among its entailments is that there are no pramāṇas.

This reply hardly seems satisfactory, however, for even if we grant that śūnyavāda is not a metaphysical thesis while the assertion of the realist opponent is, still the claim that no entities are produced has at least the form of a true-false statement, and as such we naturally expect that it should be supported by some argumentation. Just this objection is made by the opponent, and Candrakīrti replies, 'This statement is certain with respect to the world, it is not, with respect to the āryas, provided with a proof which is self-establishing . . . The ultimate [truth] of the āryas is the state of silence, hence why should there be the possibility of prapañca, whether there is a proof or not?' (P.19.23–26) Here the ārya is, of course, the person who understands the ultimate truth, i.e., the truth of śūnyatā. Candrakīrti goes on to describe the sorts of arguments which are provided for the benefit of the wordly or non-āryas, but before looking at these we must examine the distinction which is here being drawn between the worldly standpoint and the standpoint of the āryas. Why should it be the case that śūnyavāda may be considered to be established at the wordly level but not at the level of ultimate truth?

A clue is provided us in the use of the term 'prapañca', which in non-technical usage means 'deceit' or 'fraud'. The connotation is carried over into the Madhyamaka technical usage of the term, but as Yamaguchi has pointed out,[4] here the concept has to do with the term-referent distinction as it occurs in ordinary language. We may then think of prapañca as the result of what might be called the myth of the primacy of reference, the belief that it is a necessary

condition for the meaningfulness of discourse that at least some of the terms of our language refer to independently existing entities. Prapañca is a kind of fraud or deceit because, according to the Madhyamaka account of language, this belief is false, all seemingly referring expressions being mere prajñapti or conceptual fictions.[5]

It is just this, of course, which is the point of śūnyavāda. It is not, however, the aim of the Mādhyamika to make us all stop speaking. Ordinary language has its uses – and these pose no danger once we understand that our employment of ordinary language does not carry with it any commitment to an ultimate ontology. Silence is appropriate only as an expression of the ultimate truth – and this just because here discourse would be especially prone to misinterpretation, to prapañca: One naturally supposes that any statement which is proferred as the ultimate truth is to be taken as a description of some ultimate state of affairs (where states of affairs are understood to be made up of entities). Thus it would seem that when Candrakīrti describes śūnyavāda as certain with respect to the world but not provided with proof at the level of ultimate truth, he has in mind the fact that any statement of śūnyavāda which were accorded the status of ultimacy would bring with it the possibility of prapañca, and would thus prove self-defeating.

Yet there must be more at work here than just this, for Candrakīrti is clearly concerned to deny not just that he has any (metaphysical) thesis, but also that he is required to formulate a general theory of proof. To see why this is so, we must consider the connection between metaphysics and the theory of knowledge which the epistemologist seeks to exploit. The provisional and non-ultimate nature of the ontological commitment to propositions and sentential connectives which occurs in the language-game of the propositional calculus – that is, the emptiness of these entities – is easily bome in mind so long as we remember that this mode of discourse was created for a specific and quite limited purpose; similarly with our belief in the existence of onomatopoiea, and the index of labor productivity. Now the task of the metaphysician is to discover that set of entities which underlies all such merely constructed entities; and he will convince us that he has succeeded at this task only if he is able to provide arguments in defense of his ontology which are unconditional in nature, which apply equally to all modes of worldly conduct. It is here that the theory of pramāṇas enters the picture; for the epistemologist supposes that support for his favored ontology is to be found in the requirement that, if there is to be any knowledge at all, the pramāṇas must have prameyas of the appropriate sort on which to function. On this point Candrakīrti is in agreement with the epistemologist: If a universally valid theory of pramāṇas can be constructed, then the ontology to which that theory commits us may properly be considered ultimate. Of course the Mādhyamika does not believe that the antecedent of this conditional is true, but this nonetheless accounts for his refusal to seek directly to prove śūnyavāda through philosophical argumentation. To do so would be to suggest that he accepts some theory of the valid sources of knowledge, and this in turn would imply belief in

the existence of independent objects of knowledge. Śūnyavāda must rather be argued for indirectly, namely be refuting various metaphysical theories through the employment of those means of knowledge which are accepted by one's opponents. Such argumentation yields 'worldly' certainty precisely because one has then argued in accordance with conventionally accepted epistemic practices; there is in this method no pretense at ultimacy, for one's employment of any pramāṇa is merely provisional and contingent on its acceptance by some group or other.

That this correctly represents Candrakīrti's position may be seen from his discussion of the manner in which the āryas make known to the world the ultimate truth in the absence of direct proof of śūnyavāda. 'Indeed the āryas do not provide a proof through the means of conventional worldly practice; however, having the purpose of enlightening others, having ascertained that which is a proof which is well-established as far as the world is concerned, by means of just that they instruct the world' (P.19.27–29). Here we must note the extreme care which Candrakīrti takes to avoid the suggestion that the āryas seek to prove the ultimate truth. When they set out to the instruct the world through the manipulation of the conventionally accepted epistemic practices, what they construct is not a proof but rather what would be considered by the world to be a well-established proof. The qualification is crucial, for if the Mādhyamika is said simply to prove the ultimate truth, there is the implication that he is in possession of ultimate means of proof, that is, that he is in possession of a theory of pramāṇas which he knows to be unconditionally valid.

Candrakīrti likens the instruction provided by the ārya to that given by a magical creation of the Buddha who produces dispassion in the worldly bodies by showing them the defects inherent in the body. He then states,

> Just so, ordinary people suffer excessively, imposing wrong svabhāva and viśeṣa somewhere, somehow – none of which are at all apprehended by the āryas – by reason of a vision whose judgment is destroyed by the blindness of ignorance of existents. Then the āryas console them by means of arguments which are well-established with respect to that [world], e.g., 'Just as it is agreed that there is no [present] production of a presently existing pot from earth etc., so it is to be insisted upon that there is no production [of something] prior to its arising, because of the present-existence-ness of what is presently existing.' Again, 'Just as it is agreed that the production of a sprout is not from other entities such as flame, ember, etc., so it is to be insisted upon that [its production] is not, as one would want to say, from the seed either.'
>
> P.20.2–8

Two points should be noted concerning these arguments. First, these are only indirectly arguments for śūnyavāda, their principal intent being to refute various

theories of causal production. Once again, a consistent Mādhyamika may only employ reductios in defense of śūnyavāda.[6] Second, there is no feature of the arguments themselves by virtue of which they may be said to constitute merely 'worldly' proofs. These are well-formed instances of anumana (inference) of the sort regularly employed by metaphysicians in support of their theses. The relevant difference lies rather in the attitude of the propounder of these arguments toward the means of proof employed. Unlike the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika or the Naiyāyika, the Mādhyamika does not grant ultimate validity to inference or any other pramāṇa. These are not considered by him to be competent to discover the ultimate nature of reality – there being none – and are employed merely as expedients, provisional heuristic devices whose adequacy is contextually determined.

We are now able to answer a question which arose in MCE I, in connection with our examination of VV. It will be recalled that in answering the Nyāya objection that śūnyavāda cannot be asserted except with the support of some pramāṇa, Nāgārjuna claims that he neither affirms nor denies (VV v.30). We then posed the question, what sort of statement the Mādhyamika might have in mind which is neither an affirmation nor a denial, but deferred the task of answering this question. We now see that the assertion of śūnyatā is just such a statement when it is made under the condition that there are no pramāṇas in the sense intended by the epistemologist. By the standards of the epistemologist, the Mādhyamika neither affirms nor denies any statement in that, in arguing for śūnyavāda, he employs no pramāṇas to which he would grant unconditional validity. For the Naiyāyika or the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika a statement (and in particular a philosophical statement) can count as an affirmation or denial (conviction or non-conviction) only if there is in the background of its assertion at least implicit acceptance of the instruments used in its ascertainment as competent for attaining knowledge of independent reals. On the Madhyamaka view of ontological commitment, no pramāṇa can have such competency, for there are no independent reals. Those entities with which we become acquainted through the exercise of the conventionally accepted epistemic practices cannot be asserted to exist independently of these practices and the aims which they are designed to promote.

In effect, then, Candrakīrti's reply to the epistemologist's objection is that the Mādhyamika does, after all, employ pramāṇas in support of śūnyavāda. Of course 'pramāṇa' is here being used in a different sense than what the epistemologist has in mind. Given the Madhyamaka position that there can be no definitive theory of the means of knowledge, all that can be meant here by 'pramāṇa' is just what passes in worldly practice for a valid cognitive instrument. Still, if we accept the Madhyamaka position on the possibility of epistemology, this reply seems perfectly adequate. The question which now arises is why we should accept that position: What reason is there to suppose that there can be no successful theory of pramāṇas? In the second section of his discussion Candrakīrti attempts to answer this question with reference to the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika account.

(2) This section opens with the opponent claiming that the Naiyāyikas (whom he calls 'kutārkika' or sophists) have given a false definition (lakṣaṇa) of the worldly practice with respect to pramāṇa and prameya. He, on the other hand, is able to give a correct definition of this practice. It is at this point that specifically Yogācāra-Sautrāntika assumptions first enter the debate. It should be noted that as here described, the Buddhist epistemologist's task is just to give a philosophically regimented account of the prevalent intuitions concerning the valid means of knowledge and their objects. Like the Naiyāyika, then, the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika claims to be giving no more than a description of current epistemic behavior.

Candrakīrti replies that if the Nyāya definition were indeed false, then it should conflict with worldly practice; and since it does not, it is futile to attempt to improve upon their theory. No indication is given here as to the respect in which the Nyāya definitions are considered superior to those of Dignāga; we shall see below, however, that Candrakīrti severely criticizes the latter's definition of perception on the grounds that it fails to apply to many of the phenomena which are ordinarily thought of as perceptual. Candrakīrti next paraphrases VV 31, the objection that if knowledge of prameyas is acquired only through the use of pramāṇas, then it is impossible to define the pramāṇas without incurring either the fallacy of begging the question or the fallacy of infinite regress. He takes this objection to be insuperable, and the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika project to be therefore futile. Since the remainder of this section involves attempts by the opponent to meet this objection, we would do well to consider its force.

This objection was originally put against an attempt at providing the pramāṇas with intrinsic proof, that is, a proof employing no assumptions concerning the nature of the prameyas which demonstrates that certain classes of cognition are pramāṇas. The argument is that in such a proof, a given class of cognitions can be shown to be a pramāṇa only by assuming that any cognitive instrument used in the demonstration is itself a pramāṇa, in which case either the question has been begged or a vicious infinite regress will be generated. In Candrakīrti's discussion the question is formulated somewhat differently, for here what is at issue is how one arrives at an adequate definition (lakṣaṇa) of the pramāṇas. (On this point Candrakīrti was probably influenced by NS Bh II.1.16, where Vatsyāyana has the Mādhyamika acknowledge that a pramāṇa may itself be a prameya, but then go on to ask how the lakṣaṇa of perception, etc., is known.) In any case the objection remains the same: How, in advance of any knowledge of objects, are we to tell which types of cognition are reliable means of obtaining knowledge of objects?

It seems odd that Candrakīrti should begin the debate this way, since Dignāga's theory could best be thought of as involving a kind of extrinsic proof. This may be seen from *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (PS) I.1.2a—c, where Dignāga argues that there are two and only two pramāṇas, perception and inference, on the grounds that there are but two kinds of prameya, viz., the svalakṣaṇa and the sāmānyalakṣaṇa. Nor does Candrakīrti respond to this claim in quite the manner

we might expect. He argues, 'If again it is said that in conformity with the pair svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa there is a pair of pramāṇas, is there a lakṣya or is there not a lakṣya of which there is that pair of pramāṇas? If there is, then there is a prameya which is other than that pair [viz., svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa], how can there be [just] a pair of lakṣaṇas? If there is no lakṣya, then there being no lakṣaṇa which is devoid of locus, how can there be a pair of pramāṇas?' (P.20.20–22) Rather than simply point out that Dignāga is not entitled to advance any claims concerning the nature of the prameyas until he has secured some accredited means of knowledge, Candrakīrti argues that *either* Dignāga's claim introduces a new prameya, in which case a new pramāṇa is required, or else (and this part of the dilemna comes as something of a surprise) if there is no entity of which either svalakṣaṇa or sāmānyalakṣaṇa may be predicated, then it cannot be maintained that there are these two lakṣaṇa (here meaning 'defining characteristic'), hence a theory of pramāṇas cannot be constructed on this basis. In support of the latter contention, Candrakīrti quotes MMK V.4:

> And when there is no functioning of the lakṣaṇa, the lakṣya cannot be maintained. Given the impossibility of a lakṣya, a lakṣaṇa is impossible.

In the subsequent debate, it is the second horn of this dilemma – the position that a lakṣaṇa does not require an independently existing lakṣya – which the opponent seeks to support. Thus the discussion enters the realm of metaphysics, and it becomes clear that Candrakīrti considers Dignāga's position to involve a kind of extrinsic proof. Yet this is not the sort of extrinsic proof with which we are familiar from VV. There Nāgārjuna was concerned to refute the position that a theory of pramāṇas might be constructed by employing what we ordinarily suppose we know about common-sense objects, e.g., that water quenches thirst, in order to demonstrate that certain classes of cognition are reliable means of knowledge. Nāgārjuna's opponent, however, is epistemologically a direct realist and metaphysically a common-sense realist; Candrakīrti's opponent is neither. I refer to the school founded by Dignāga as 'Yogācāra-Sautrāntika' because its theory of knowledge was worked out in the hope that it would be found acceptable by both the Yogācāra school and the Sautrāntika school. The former is well-known for its subjective idealism. The latter might best be thought of as maintaining a kind of critical realism, in that its representationalism leads it to deny that the external object is directly known, yet it nonetheless feels constrained to posit external objects as the grounds of our perceptual cognition.

It might be thought that no theory of knowledge could possibly satisfy both schools, but here Dignāga displays remarkable ingenuity. He maintains that the cognitive situation is such that we must posit two distinct kinds of entities: the svalakṣaṇa, a unique and uncharacterizable occurrent of atomic spatial and temporal extent; and the sāmānyalakṣaṇa or universal, e.g., 'cow', 'blue', etc. The

latter sort of entity is entirely the result of parikalpanā or conceptual construction; since only the particular exists, anything to which there may be linguistic reference (even if only by what we take to be a logically proper name, such as 'this') has merely saṃvṛti-sat or conventional existence. The realm of the constructed requires a base of reals, however, and this role is played by the svalakṣaṇa. It is this which is the object of perception (which for Dignāga is always nirvikalpaka or indeterminate), but it would seem that the svalakṣaṇa is indirectly cognized in inference as well. (This in any event is the position of later members of the school.) Thus our common-sense objects, though all constructed entities, are constructed on the basis of a set of reals.

While the two types of prameya are radically distinct in nature and ontological status, they share one crucial characteristic: Both are immanent to cognition. Dignāga is famous in Indian epistemology for his theory that every cognition has two forms (ākāra, ābhāṣa, rūpa): the form of the object (viṣayākāra) and the form of the cognition itself (svākāra). He argues that unless both forms were present in the cognition, we should be unable to distinguish between the cognition of an object and the cognition which has this cognition as its object; similarly we should be unable to account for the nature of memory. It follows from this that the prameya must be contained within the cognition itself. Dignāga believes that even the Sautrāntika, as a representationalist, is required to accept this. Yet it would not seem surprising if the Sautrāntika found this unsatisfactory, for this account appears not to leave room for the assertion of any type of realism, however critical.

It is at this point that Dignāga's subtlety becomes apparent, for we now realize that the discussion has so far taken place within the brackets of conventional reality. It is the worldly practice with respect to the cognitive situation which requires us to distinguish between pramāṇa and prameya and, in the case of the latter, between svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa. Now the sāmānyalakṣaṇa is ordinarily recognized as existent; it is only philosophical reflection that causes us to deny the existence of the common-sense object and insist that the unique particular alone is real. But the reality which is here ascribed to the svalakṣaṇa and denied the sāmānyalakṣaṇa is just saṃvṛti (albeit a philosophically refined saṃvṛti); for the very notion of a prameya is dependent on the existence of conventional epistemic practices, and the prameya is thus ultimately unreal. We may then go on to state that what is ultimately real is of the nature of the svalakṣaṇa, but more than this Dignāga will not say; his concern is to do epistemology, not metaphysics. The Yogācāra and the Sautrāntika are then free to argue over whether ultimately the svalakṣaṇa is ideational or external in nature. Thus Dignāga feels that the Sautrāntika has lost nothing in giving up mention of the external object in the description of the pramāṇa-prameya relationship.

All of this should help explain why Hattori is of the opinion that Nāgārjuna's position on the possibility of epistemology does not conflict with Dignāga's theory.[7] Unlike the Naiyāyika, Dignāga does not maintain that pramāṇa and prameya are ultimately real entities. He assumes an ontology solely for the

purpose of correctly defining the valid means of knowledge. It is clearly his hope that once this end is achieved, we will be better able to determine the ultimate nature of reality, but he hardly imagines himself to be doing the latter task. In this case Dignāga is immune to Nāgārjuna's objections, for these are all aimed at a theory which attempts to demonstrate that there are independently existent reals on the basis of an account of the pramāṇas, and this is not the objective of the Buddhist epistemologist. Indeed we can now see that Dignāga's theory involves neither extrinsic nor intrinsic proof, as these terms are used by Nāgārjuna. While Dignāga does determine the number and nature of the pramāṇas in dependence on an account of the prameyas, it must be remembered both that the pramāṇa-prameya distinction is not taken as ultimately valid, and that in the cognitive situation the prameya is asserted to be immanent to cognition.

Hattori also holds that Candrakīrti's criticism 'does not fundamentally affect Dignāga's standpoint,'[8] but it should be noted that he takes this criticism to amount to the claim that 'there is nothing to be apprehended in the ultimate sense.' It remains to be seen just how fair this characterization is. We are still puzzled, however, by the fact that Candrakīrti opens the debate with Nāgārjuna's argument against intrinsic proof, which now seems particularly inappropriate. As we shall soon see, however, Candrakīrti's general procedure here is dialectical in the extreme: He only introduces elements of the opponent's theory as these are needed to respond to objections made against those portions of the theory already brought forward. Thus it is possible that Candrakīrti's strategy is this: He begins with this objection so that the opponent will, in responding to this, reveal the crucial role which his account of the prameyas plays in his theory of pramāṇas. Candrakīrti at least provisionally accepts this move as legitimate, since it appears to accord with the spirit of the Madhyamaka critique of epistemology: The Buddhist epistemologist appears to recognize that pramāṇa' and 'prameya' are interdependent concepts, and thus does not strive to determine the nature of the one in isolation from the other. Rather, his task is to characterize adequately the structure of appearance and our knowledge thereof, given what is known of the cognitive situation from worldly practice. And it is this project at which Candrakīrti's objections are aimed; for he is not convinced that it is possible to construct an adequate theory of the structure of appearance. In this case the ensuing debate will involve both metaphysical and epistemological questions, for what is at issue is whether, having once recognized the interrelatedness of 'pramāṇa' and 'prameya', we may then go on to give a general theory of the nature of that world which is circumscribed by these two concepts.

We shall put this interpretation of Candrakīrti's strategy to the test by examining his criticisms in its light. We are now able to appreciate the significance of the dilemma which Candrakīrti poses concerning the lakṣaṇalakṣya relationship. It is no accident that Dignāga's two prameyas are both termed 'lakṣaṇa' (characteristic), for on his account the object of knowledge is not an independently existing entity but something immanent to consciousness, something of the

nature of an ākāra (form) or ābhāṣa (aspect or manifestation). The question then arises, what entity this lakṣaṇa characterizes; for the use of the term 'lakṣaṇa' suggests the existence of a lakṣya. Now with respect to the sāmānyalakṣaṇa this presents no difficulty, since that may be said to characterize the svalakṣaṇa (though only indirectly, of course). With the svalakṣaṇa the case is different, however, for not only would treatment of this as the characteristic of some independent entity threaten its status as a unique particular, such treatment would also result in the introduction of yet a third entity to our ontology, thus raising the question how this object is to be cognized.

The opponent now tries to overcome this objection through the use of various devices. The first is grammatical; he proposes that the lyuḍ suffix (-ana) should be treated not as instrumental in force, but as having the force of the accusative case. Thus 'lakṣaṇa' here means 'that which is characterized' and not, as is ordinarily thought, 'that by which something is characterized'. Candrakīrti replies, 'But then there is a defect, due to the difference in meaning of the accusative from the instrumental by which this is characterized, because of the impossibility of the being characterized of this by that' (P.20.26–27). The opponent is here taking 'svalakṣaṇa' to mean 'self-characterized entity'. (In this we may see the final stage in a long history of development of the Buddhist concept of a dharma under the influence of nominalism.) The response is that we are nonetheless required to distinguish between characteristic and bearer of characteristic, since it is incomprehensible that one and the same entity should fulfil both functions.

To say that the svalakṣaṇa is self-characterizing is just to say that it is unique – or in any event this is what the opponent wishes to say. The difficulty is that he seeks to absolutize what is necessarily a relativistic concept. A given entity may be said to be unique only in some determinate respect or another; the patch of gray which I am now seeing is spatio-temporally unique, and perhaps unique in respect of its shade of grayness as well, but it is for all that a colored patch. If we seek to rule out all such shared characteristics, what we are left with is the notion of bare self-identity, which shows that the opponent has confused the 'is' of predication and the 'is' of identity. In general an entity l may be said to be characterized by some predicate L only if it is possible to refer to l by some expression 'α' which is not the name of L. Now suppose that 'α' is a logically proper name, having reference but no sense, and that L uniquely characterizes l. In this case the statement, 'α is L' will be analytic and thus utterly uninformative. This shows that if 'α' is a proper name, it must be analytically tied to a disjunction of predicates L, M, N, O, . . ., such that its assertion connotes some (unspecified) set of these disjuncts. In this case it is no longer possible to maintain the identity of l and L, for L belongs to a plurality of predicates all of which may be asserted of l.

The opponent now introduces the claim that it is a cognition which, by its instrumental nature, serves to characterize the svalakṣaṇa. He claims that his account is not vitiated by the above defect 'because of the instrumental nature of consciousness and its character as a svalakṣaṇa' (P.20.28). From the stress

which is laid on the assertion that a cognition is itself a svalakṣaṇa, it is clear that the opponent is seeking to meet the objection that lakṣaṇa and lakṣya must be thought of as distinct (which is here put in terms of the claim that there must be both accusative and instrumental case-natures) without admitting to his ontology anything other than the unique savalakṣaṇa. Candrakīrti begins his response by giving the canonical understanding of the term 'svalakṣaṇa'. Traditionally by this term is meant the essential property of a class of existents, e.g., the hardness of earth dharmas, the experience of making felt of vedanā dharmas, etc. (It was this notion and the related concept of a svabhāva which were the targets of Nāgārjuna's critique in MMK V.) He then goes on to elucidate further the position of the opponent as follows: 'Having [nonetheless] settled on 'this is characterized by just this [itself]', ignoring the well-proven derivation [of 'svalakṣaṇa'], he affirms a means of action. By admitting the instrumental nature of cognition, it is said that there is the accusativeness of just the svalakṣaṇa and the instrumental nature of another svalakṣaṇa.' (P.20.29–21.2) The opponent wishes to maintain that in the case of the svalakṣaṇa, lakṣaṇa and lakṣya are not distinct. He now concedes that such an entity must allow of two different types of determination: as the object of characterization (accusative), e.g., as earth dharma; and as falling under some characterization (instrumental), e.g., as characterized by hardness. While he still insists that with a true svalakṣaṇa, 'earth' and 'hardness' are not distinct, he grants that these functions cannot be performed by the same entity. Thus he proposes that the svalakṣaṇa itself be thought of as performing the accusative function, while an instance of cognition, which is itself a svalakṣaṇa, performs the instrumental function, that is, serves to characterize the object. The contention, then, is that while the prameya is a lakṣya which is its own lakṣaṇa, within the cognitive situation it may be thought of as the lakṣya while it is the pramāṇa which determines its lakṣaṇa. Since both prameya and cognition are on this account svalakṣaṇas, we are not here faced with the difficulties inherent in the analysis of the subject-predicate relation, difficulties which have so far provided the Mādhyamika with the basis of his objections.

Candrakīrti's response is cryptic: 'But then if the consciousness svalakṣaṇa is the instrumental, it should be by means of a distinct accusative of that, just this is the defect.' To what does the 'that' refer, and what is the force of 'distinct' here? Both Stcherbatsky[9] and Mookerji[10] take 'that' to refer to the prameya svalakṣaṇa. The former interprets Candrakīrti as objecting that in this case lakṣaṇa and lakṣya are distinct, since the lakṣaṇa now stands on the side of the cognition, not the object. On this reading, however, Candrakīrti has missed the point of the opponent's strategy, which was designed to forestall this objection by making the cognition the instrument of determination of the lakṣaṇa while leaving the lakṣaṇa itself on the side of the prameya. Moreover this reading requires us to suppose that the opponent has introduced the hypothesis that the form of the object is immanent to consciousness, and there is no evidence to show that this has yet occurred. Mookerji, while seeing that here the lakṣaṇa is

said to stand on the side of the prameya, takes Candrakīrti to be objecting that since the prameya and the cognition which is its determining instrument are then distinct, the old difficulties concerning the lakṣaṇa-lakṣya relation will necessarily recur. This interpretation, too, is odd, since the opponent has already granted that prameya svalakṣaṇa and cognition are distinct; his point was that since both entities are svalakṣaṇas, the said difficulties do not arise.

I think that Candrakīrti should be taken as saying that on this hypothesis there must be *two* occurrences of the accusative. That is, I take 'that' to refer to the lakṣaṇa aspect of the prameya, and 'distinct' to mean 'distinct from the accusative occurrence of the lakṣya aspect of the prameya'. On this reading the objection is then that since a cognition requires a distinct object occurring in the accusative, if it is thought that the cognition svalakṣaṇa serves to determine the lakṣaṇa aspect of the prameya (e.g., 'hardness'), then this aspect must itself occur as a distinct accusative. But now while the cognition stands in the instrumental relation to the accusative hardness, the latter must be said once again to stand in an instrumental relation to the separate accusative earth. That is, on this account a cognition takes hardness as its object, but hardness is said in turn to characterize earth. Thus the old difficulties concerning the relation between earth and hardness, lakṣya and lakṣaṇa, reemerge.

That this interpretation is correct is shown by the opponent's next move: 'Or it may be that the accusative of that [the lakṣaṇa] is just what is to be apprehended by consciousness, the hardness, etc., of earth, etc., and that is not distinct from the svalakṣaṇa' (P.21.4–5). Here the opponent seeks to meet Candrakīrti's objection by proposing that the two accusatives be considered as one, so that the cognition of hardness is, as such, the cognition of earth. Candrakīrti responds with a dilemma: Is the cognition svalakṣaṇa itself an object of knowledge or not? The proposal as so far specified would seem to suggest that the cognition, as the exclusive bearer of the instrumental case-nature, cannot occur in the accusative, and thus is not a prameya. In this case, however, the epistemologist's initial characterization of the prameya as two-fold is faulty, for he must add that only some svalakṣaṇa are prameya, others being cognitions which are not prameya. Such an admission would, however, wreak havoc with his system, which is based in part on the supposition that the terms 'svalakṣaṇa' and 'object of perception' are coextensive. Moreover there will then arise the embarrassing question, how the existence of the cognition svalakṣaṇa is ascertained.

Consideration of the second half of this dilemna brings with it the introduction of the epistemologist's assertion that the object of knowledge is immanent to cognition. To grasp this horn is to affirm that the cognition svalakṣaṇa is an object of knowledge, that is, has an accusative occurrence. Under the present constraints this must mean either that the prameya svalakṣaṇa and the cognition constitute a single accusative, or that the cognition stands to prameya in the instrumental relation while itself being the accusative of another cognition. (The possibility that a single entity might contain both accusative and instrumental case-natures will be considered later.) The second alternative, however repre-

sents the Nyāya doctrine of anuvyavasāya (introspection) which the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika rejects on the grounds that one could not distinguish between a given cognition and a subsequent anuvyavasāya cognition which takes that as its object. Thus only the first alternative, that the cognition svalakṣaṇa is assimilated to the accusative of its prameya, is considered here. Candrakīrti's criticism is this: 'If the means of action [the cognition] is just that [the svalakṣaṇa], then it should come to be by means of another instrumental of that [cognition]; in positing an instrumental case-nature of another cognition, this incurs the fallacy of infinite regress.' If a second cognition is required in order for the first to qualify as prameya, then it would seem that a third is likewise needed in order for the second to count as an object of knowledge, and so on.

At this point we at long last come to the full statement of the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika position. In order to escape this latest difficulty, the opponent introduces the hypothesis that there is self-cognition (svasaṃvitti). This gives us the last of the major elements of Dignāga's theory, which also includes the claims that there are two prameyas and two pramāṇas, that the svalakṣaṇa is absolutely unique and thus logically simple, and that the prameya is immanent to cognition. To this list of claims the opponent is now required to add the claim that a cognition cognizes itself, since he wishes to maintain both that the prameya is immanent to consciousness and that the cognition is itself a prameya. On the resulting account a cognition consists of two forms, the form of the object (which constitutes the prameya), and the form of the cognition (which constitutes the pramāṇa); the cognition as resultant (pramāṇaphala), that is, the actual occurrence of an item of knowledge, is identified with the cognition's self-cognizing activity. It is held that in this manner the following requirements are all satisfied: Both accusative and instrumental natures are located in a single svalakṣaṇa; the character of the prameya is simple, lakṣaṇa and lakṣya being one; and the pramāṇa is itself a prameya.

By way of reply to this proposal, Candrakīrti refers us to his remarks on self-cognition in *Madhyamakāvatāra*, but he also provides the following comments: 'The svalakṣaṇa is determined by another svalakṣaṇa, it cannot be shown that that is by means of self-cognition. Moreover that cognition in no way exists, being impossible because it is unproven without [another] svalakṣaṇa, because of the impossibility of the functioning of a lakṣaṇa devoid of locus in the absence of a lakṣya; how can there be self-cognition?' (P.21.11–14) First, to say that an entity is cognized is to say that it is determined (lakṣyate) by some distinct entity, namely a cognition; no one would want to say that the object is self-cognized. Similarly, on the side of the cognition, we must say that the occurrence of this is impossible unless there is a distinct entity which serves as its object. For we can grant the epistemologist's claim that the form of the object (visayākāra), i.e., the lakṣaṇa of the prameya, exists within cognition, only if we are prepared to admit the existence of a distinct lakṣya, namely a separate prameya svalakṣaṇa. Otherwise we shall be unable to determine which of the two forms of the cognition, the visayākāra or the svākāra, characterizes the cog-

nition, and which characterizes the object. Indeed it would seem that in this case both must count as svākāra.

Candrakīrti goes on to cite the following argument from the *Āryaratnacuḍa-paripṛcchā*:

> How does the arising of consciousness, not perceiving what possesses consciousness, investigate the stream of consciousness? Of that it is thus: There being an object, consciousness arises. Then either consciousness and its object are mutually distinct, or what is the object, that is the consciousness itself. If consciousness and the object are mutually distinct, then to that extent there will be two consciousness-natures. If just what is the object is the consciousness itself, how does that consciousness perceive consciousness by means of consciousness? And it is not the case that consciousness perceives consciousness. Just as, e.g., it is not possible for a sword-edge to cut that sword-edge itself. Nor is it possible for a finger-tip to touch that finger-tip itself, just so it is not possible for consciousness to see that by means of that very consciousness.
>
> P.21.15–18.

It must be the case that a cognition and its object are either distinct or identical; and in neither case is it possible that the cognition cognizes itself. For on the first supposition, a single cognition must simultaneously apprehend two distinct objects. And the second supposition violates the general rule that a subject cannot be the object of its own activity. The author of this work might be criticized for providing such sapakṣa as the knife and the finger-tip, while ignoring the sapakṣa which the opponent offers in support of his thesis, the lamp which illuminates itself. It will be recalled, however, that Nāgārjuna has disposed of this example in VV 34–39, where it is considered in connection with the claim that the pramāṇas validate themselves.

In any event svaprakāsavāda (the doctrine that a cognition is self-illuminating) will be of no avail to the opponent, for he has yet to answer the Madhyamaka criticism concerning the lakṣaṇa-lakṣya relation. Candrakīrti now puts this in terms of the following dilemna: In the makeup of the prameya, are lakṣya and lakṣaṇa distinct, or are they identical? If they are distinct, 'then to that extent the lakṣaṇa, like a non-lakṣaṇa, is not a lakṣaṇa, because of its distinctness from the lakṣya' (P.21.27–8). If earth and hardness are to be thought of as distinct, then they must be related (as we should put it) in a merely contingent fashion, after the manner of, e.g., earth and warmth. But this is hardly the relation which we expect to obtain between lakṣya and lakṣaṇa, for the latter is meant to serve as the defining characteristic of the former, such that an occurrence of earth is necessarily an occurrence of hardness. What, then, if we say that the two are identical? 'Or if lakṣya and lakṣaṇa are non-distinct then the lakṣaṇa, because of its non-distinctness from a non-lakṣaṇa, being just self-identical, is

deprived of its characterizing of the lakṣya. And moreover, the lakṣaṇa, possessing the self-nature of a lakṣya because of its non-distinctness from the lakṣya, does not have the svabhāva of a lakṣaṇa' (P.21.30–22.1). Once again, to identify lakṣaṇa and lakṣya is to confuse the 'is' of predication and the 'is' of identity.

It might be objected (though there is no hint of such an objection at this point in the text) that Candrakīrti has here posed a false dichotomy. The relation between a substance and its essence is neither one of identity nor one of difference. Indeed we are tempted to say that the Mādhyamika has committed a category mistake, for surely 'earth' and 'hardness' are subsumed under different categories. As we shall see, however, the fault here lies with the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika, for he is operating with an extremely impoverished categorial framework; Candrakīrti is merely displaying the consequences of the ontological parsimony of his opponent.

Candrakīrti next considers an attempt to solve these difficulties by resort to the doctrine of inexpressibility (avācyatā). Since the svalakṣaṇa is absolutely unique, it must be ineffable, utterly non-denotable. Here the opponent seeks to employ this fact in his account of the lakṣaṇa-lakṣya relation as it pertains to the prameya. Since the svalakṣaṇa is itself ineffable, he proposes that we consider this relation as well to be ineffable. Candrakīrti responds, 'There is indeed inexpressibility only if there is the non-existence of discrimination by means of mutual distinction. And where there is no discrimination by means of distinctness, then the determination according to the difference, "this is lakṣaṇa, this is lakṣya" being impossible, there will be absence of the two' (P.22.8–10). The opponent seeks, of course, to demonstrate the tenability of his claim that the svalakṣaṇa is logically atomic in constitution, but with this strategy he concedes too much. To assert that since the svalakṣaṇa is ineffable, defining characteristic and bearer cannot be distinguished in thought, is to say that there are here no grounds for the application of the distinction. In this case, however, it becomes unclear whether what we have is an entity in which lakṣaṇa and lakṣya are one and the same, or rather something to which neither term is applicable. And the latter possibility brings with it the consequence that the svalakṣaṇa, so conceived, is not a prameya at all; for if it is not possible to say of the svalakṣaṇa either that it is the bearer of some characteristic or that it is characterized by some lakṣaṇa,[11] then it is far from clear that we are any longer speaking of a particular existent. While it would no doubt be naive to expect an ineffable entity to conform in every respect to our commonsense model of an object (such as a pot), it is legitimate to demand that such an entity be conceived of as bearing some attribute whereby it may be distinguished from other objects; and the opponent's present strategy calls into question the ability of the svalakṣaṇa to fulfil this demand.

There next occurs a digression in which Candrakīrti takes up the issue of agency in the cognitive situation. So far attention has been focused on occurrences of the accusative and instrumental cases in descriptions of cognition. It is agreed that a cognition (jñāna) plays the role of instrumental, that is, serves as

the instrument of determination of the object. In this case, asks Candrakīrti, 'What is the agent? There is no possibility of the instrumental, etc., without the nominative, as in the case of cutting' (P.22.12–13). The paradigm referred to here is, 'He cuts the tree with the axe;' the verb 'to cut' requires, in addition to an accusative ('tree') and an instrumental ('axe'), an occurrence of the nominative ('he'). The opponent now proposes that consciousness (vijñāna) be considered the agent. Here Candrakīrti is following kārika I.3 of the Yogācara text *Madhyāntavibhāga*, where it is asserted that while neither subject nor object exists ultimately, both being mere constructs which are falsely imposed on the form or appearance (pratibhāṣa) of ideation (vijñapti), for purposes of analysis we may identify the cognizing subject (grāhaka) with consciousness (vijñāna). This will not do, however, since it is generally agreed among Buddhists that consciousness apprehends the mere object (i.e., the lakṣya), while cognition apprehends the qualifiers of the object (i.e., its lakṣaṇa and accidental attributes). Candrakīrti quotes the same Yogācāra text to this effect:

> There consciousness is the cognizing of the object, the caitasas (conscious concomitants) the qualifier of the object.[12]

Now in general occurrences of the instrumental, accusative, etc., may be said to pertain to some one principal action only if each makes some contribution to the performance of that action. There is, however, no principal action in which both consciousness and cognition both play a part, since the former has to do with the apprehension of the object while the latter pertains to the apprehension of its qualifiers. Thus it cannot be the case that where cognition serves as instrumental, consciousness plays the role of agent. It then follows that the opponent's claim that there is an instrumentality immanent to an occurrence of cognition is itself suspect, since he is unable to specify an agent for the activity of cognizing.

The opponent responds that it is most un-Buddhistic to insist that a merely grammatical requirement – that an agent be specified for all actions – should be fulfilled in the philosophical analysis of the cognitive situation. On this point the Buddhists appear to be in virtually unanimous agreement. Surface grammar need not reflect underlying ontology. In particular it does not follow from the fact that we are required to supply a nominative with verbs of cognition, that there exists a real cognizer. What the opponent has sought to do – albeit in a manner which is inconsistent with his own terminological stipulations – is pick out an aspect of the cognitive situation which may serve as the ultimate referent of the fiction 'cognizer'. He does so not because he takes vijñāna to be itself a cognizer, but simply because he assumes that our use of the fiction can be explained only by showing that it is constructed from some real entity or set of entities. In reality there is no cognizer, there is just the occurrence of cognition. In our analysis we may distinguish among various aspects of the cognition, identifying these as subjective and objective components; but ultimately there is

neither subject nor object, there is only ideation. And at least in his denial of the existence of a subject the opponent seems to have the full weight of the Buddhist tradition behind him.

Candrakīrti replies that the opponent has missed the full significance of the anātman thesis, and refers us to his explication of anātman in *Madhyamakāvatāra*. We can already see what Candrakīrti has in mind here, however, for we know that the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika proposes to provide a correct definition of the worldly practice with respect to pramāṇa and prameya; that is, his analysis is purported to be nothing more than a description of conventional epistemic practice. As such, this account is thoroughly ensconced on the side of saṃvṛti, that species of truth which is determined by conventional linguistic behavior. Now it is well known that the Mādhyamikas reinterpret the doctrine of anātman as the doctrine of niḥsvabhāvatā, the denial that there are ultimately any self-existent reals. Anātmavāda thus belongs on the side of paramārtha or absolute truth, for it is just the assertion that ontological commitment is a function of linguistic practice, and it is thus a higher-order characterization of saṃvṛti. If this is correct, however, then the epistemologist may not legitimately employ the anātman doctrine in defense of some feature of his analysis, for that analysis must proceed within the boundaries of those structures which govern our linguistic behavior, and anātmavāda is not among these. Indeed at the saṃvṛti level the anātman thesis is false, for conventional linguistic practice requires that the nominative be filled when we employ verbs of cognition. While the Mādhyamika would agree that ultimately there is no experiencing subject, this thesis cannot be incorporated into an account of knowledge and its object, since that task can proceed only if we accept those linguistic devices which make possible our talk of pramāṇa and prameya.

We now return to the problem of the lakṣya-lakṣaṇa relation, the opponent having conceived of a new strategy for dealing with the difficulties inherent in this relation. 'But perhaps just as in the expressions, "the body of the statue" and "Rāhu's head", while it is impossible that there be any qualifier distinct from body and head, there is a qualifier-qualified relation (viśeṣana-viśeṣyabhāva), so too there will be the svalakṣaṇa of earth although there can be no earth apart from its svalakṣaṇa' (P.22.23–25). Here several points require explication. First, Rāhu is a mythical creature who consists of just a head. Second, 'Rāhu' and 'statue' here count as qualifiers (viśeṣana) because, in the expressions 'head of Rāhu' and 'body of the statue', each term occurs in the genitive case. This does not mean that the entities corresponding to these terms are here being treated as predicates; it shall be proposed below that Rāhu is the possessor (upādātṛ) of his head. Finally it should be pointed out that here the opponent has reverted to the traditional usage of 'svalakṣaṇa', as meaning 'own defining characteristic'; this is made clear in his reference to hardness as the svalakṣaṇa of earth. The opponent's strategy, then, is to demonstrate the tenability of his claim that lakṣya and lakṣaṇa are one by pointing out certain ordinary-language expressions in which two terms standing in a qualifier-qualified relation both refer to one and the

same entity. If 'the head of Rāhu' is a meaningful expression, then by the same token it should be possible to speak meaningfully of both earth and its hardness even though earth and hardness are in fact one.[13]

In his reply to this proposal Candrakīrti makes use of the notion of ākāṅkṣa or expectation, the notion that a given occurrence of a term is productive of the expectation that certain associated terms will also occur.

> In the case of the words 'body' and 'head', their occurrence being related to other associated things like intellect and hands, when the object consisting of just the words 'body' or 'head' is productive of intellection, it occurs having the requirement (expectation) of some other associated thing to complete the sense: 'The body of whom?', 'The head of whom?' It is then appropriate for someone else who desires to prevent the relation to some other qualifier, to remove the expectation of the interlocutor by means of the qualifier-words 'statue' and 'Rāhu' in conformity with worldly convention. But there being no possibility of earth, etc., apart from hardness, etc., the qualifier-qualified relation is not appropriate [in this case].
>
> P.22.25–29.

Here we must remember that 'hardness' is doing duty for a *unique* defining characteristic, one which pertains to nothing but earth. This follows equally from the doctrine that the svalakṣaṇa is an absolutely unique particular, and from the thesis that here lakṣaṇa and lakṣya are non-distinct; on either assumption an instance of hardness is necessarily an instance of earth. In this case the conditions for the suitable operation of 'expectation' are not met. To understand an occurrence of 'body' is, among other things, to have the expectation that some one among a range of appropriate terms will complete the intended sense. Thus 'of the statue' serves as a qualifier only because it functions to exclude other terms belonging to this range. With 'hardness', however, there can be no such range, since 'hardness' can have but one expectation, viz., 'earth'. Thus it is not correct to speak of 'of earth' as the qualifier of 'hardness'.

Candrakīrti continues,

> If [you say:] Because of the admission by the Tīrthikas of a distinct lakṣya, the designation of a qualifier in conformity with that is non-vitiated, it is not so. It is not correct to affirm the categories which on your doctrine are imagined by the Tīrthikas and are devoid of proof. Because of the consequence of affirming other pramāṇas, etc.
>
> P.23.1–3.

Here we encounter a major source of difficulty for the epistemologist. He seeks to answer the last objection by proposing that 'earth' be considered the name of that substance which bears the quality of hardness; in this way it may still be

maintained that 'earth' and 'hardness' stand in a qualifier-qualified relation, since the assertion of 'hardness' will then produce the expectation of some lakṣya, so that 'of earth' will be required to complete the sense.[14] The 'Tīrthikas' (non-Buddhists) whom he has in mind are the Naiyāyikas, who admit the categories of substance and quality, as well as the relation of inherence (samavāya) which obtains between substance and quality. This move is illegitimate, however, since it conflicts with the opponent's fundamental position that there are but two prameyas and two associated pramāṇas. To employ this portion of the Nyāya table of categories he would be required to admit at least two additional pramāṇas. It is for precisely this reason that Candrakīrti is able so effectively to employ the dialectic of identity and difference in his examination of the opponent's doctrine of the svalakṣaṇa. Indeed, given their ontology the only relations which may be granted any real status by the Yogācāra-Sautrāntikas are just identity and difference.

A second objection to the attempt to assimilate the svalakṣaṇa to the cases of the statue and Rāhu is as follows:

> Moreover because of the real existence, without proof by analysis, of a qualifier, as a part of the conventional worldly behavior, the possessor 'statue' of what is possessed, 'body', like the construct 'person'. And because of the real existence of the possessor, Rāhu, of the possessing of a head – this proposition is not correct.
>
> P.23.3–6.

It cannot be maintained in the cases of Rāhu and the statue that qualifier and qualified are in fact identical, since we would not ordinarily be inclined to say e.g., that Rāhu is a head, but rather that Rāhu has a head. Here our use of the term 'person' is instructive. The Buddhist wants to insist that this term is a mere construct (prajñapti), a conceptual fiction which is constructed out of corporeal elements, feeling, sensation, etc. Be this as it may, conventional linguistic behavior involves recognition of the existence of a person as that which has bodily parts, feelings, etc. By the same token, although it could be argued that Rāhu consists of nothing over and above a head, still within that type of discourse from which the example is chosen we are inclined to distinguish between Rāhu and his head.

The opponent now objects that there is no proof of the existence of Rāhu as something distinct from the head, or of the statue as something distinct from the body. That the conventional manner of speaking suggests that such things exist should not be taken as establishing that these examples are inappropriate, that here qualifier- and qualified-terms do not refer to one and the same thing. It can be demonstrated by reductive analysis that the terms 'Rāhu', construed as the possessor of a head, and 'statue', construed as the possessor of a body, have no real referral apart from the head and body respectively. To this objection Candrakīrti replies as follows:

> That is not so, because of the non-occurrence, in worldly behavior, of analysis in this manner, and because the reality of the worldly categories is not from analysis. Just as indeed the self, being analyzed as distinct from rūpa, etc., is not possible, but by worldly convention there is the reality of that, not depending on the skandhas, just so there is no proof of the assertion concerning the head of Rāhu and the statue as well.
>
> P.23.6–8.

If the opponent insists on employing reductive analysis on the cases of Rāhu and the statue, he shall soon lose sight not only of Rāhu and the statue but of the head and the body as well, for the latter are no more real, on his terms, than the former. Both 'statue' and 'body' are terms whose meaningfulness derives not from their reference (whether direct, or indirect by way of conceptual construction) to ultimate reals, but rather from their use within pragmatically determined contexts of discourse. If the opponent wishes to employ sapakṣa chosen from the realm of saṃvṛti, then he must be prepared to accept that set of categories which is suggested by our conventional linguistic behavior; and thus it will turn out that the statue and its body are distinct reals.

Candrakīrti continues, 'Thus if indeed the lakṣya, being analyzed as distinct from the hardness, etc., of earth, etc., does not exist, and if the lakṣaṇa is [shown by analysis to be] devoid of locus by being distinct from its lakṣya, this is just saṃvṛti; the masters have established the proof [of this] by proving that the two [lakṣya and lakṣaṇa] are mutually dependent' (P.23.9–11). So far all of the opponent's attempts at showing that, in the constitution of the prameya, lakṣya and lakṣaṇa are one, have ended in failure. What happenes if we decide that these are, after all, ultimately distinct? In this case there awaits the argument, already encountered above, which shows that neither lakṣaṇa nor lakṣya exists. Thus neither alternative appears to be open to the opponent. The reason for this is not far to seek, however. The terms 'lakṣya' and 'lakṣaṇa' belong to saṃvṛti, they are derived from and reflect the manner in which we conduct linguistic exchanges. As such, the two terms are subject to 'dependent coorigination' (pratītya samutpāda) in the special Madhyamaka sense – the terms are 'mutually dependent', that is, interdefinable. Thus neither term may serve as the name of an isolated entity without internal relations – which is what the thesis of difference demands. All this is established by Nāgārjuna in his critique of svabhāva. The upshot of this is that lakṣya and lakṣaṇa may be said to be neither ultimately identical nor ultimately different. If hardness is thought of as the lakṣaṇa of earth, then we must think of earth as at least logically distinct from hardness, yet to do so is to think of earth under some alternative description, that is, as having some other lakṣaṇa. If Dignāga's system is founded on the notion of the unique particular, then it must be founded on this fact.

Candrakīrti goes on to point out that the allegedly privileged existents of the dharma theory (e.g., rūpa, vedanā, etc.) will all, when subjected to the sort of

analysis which proved Rāhu and the statue not to be reals, themselves turn out to be (ultimately) unreal. (He is here referring to the arguments of MMK IV.) The lesson for the opponent is clear: Reductive analysis cannot help us discover the underlying reals, for the only available notion of the real is just that found within saṃvṛti, that which is countenanced by the 'worldly categories'. To exist is just to be a dependent construct (upādāya prajñapti).

The opponent now retorts that he is the victim of gross misrepresentation. The Mādhyamika appears to believe that the epistemologist's system is intended as an account of the ultimate nature of knowledge and reality. Nothing could be farther from the truth. All that he seeks to do is give a logically regimented description of conventional epistemic practices. If, in carrying out this project, we do violence to some portion of our commonsense view of things, this is unfortunate but necessary; for saṃvṛti must be put on a firm foundation, and this means that our conventional practices must be analyzed with an eye to logical consistency. One result of this is the introduction of such counter-intuitive notions as that of the svalakṣaṇa. We should not, however, be misled by the oddness of this notion: The existence of the svalakṣaṇa is demanded by the practices which constitute saṃvṛti, and thus it must be thought of as a conventional real. It may well turn out that the svalakṣaṇa is also ultimately real, but that is not our concern here; we seek only to describe the structure of appearance, given the nature of the cognitive situation.

Candrakīrti responds to this by describing his treatment of saṃvṛti, which he contrasts with that of the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika. Both agree that saṃvṛti is instrumentally valuable insofar as it is 'the cause of the accumulation of the roots of merit which are conducive to liberation'; and they agree as well that saṃvṛti 'is not the apprehension of reality', that is, must be distinguished from paramārtha, in part on the grounds that as it stands it is not logically consistent.

> But you, by means of too-clever intellection concerning the paramārtha-saṃvṛti distinction, having inserted proof, wrongly destroy this saṃvṛti. I, however, because of proficiency in the establishment of conventional truth, having settled upon the worldly thesis, rendering ineffective, by means of one proof, another proof which is thrown up as contradicting a portion of saṃvṛti, like a world-elder, I refute you, who are falling away from worldly conduct, but I do not refute saṃvṛti.
>
> P.23.19–22.

If we accept the claim that the epistemologist is theorizing at the level of saṃvṛti, then he may be said to have gone astray in losing sight of the distinction between paramārtha and saṃvṛti. It is paramārtha which is characterized by logical consistency, not saṃvṛti. The latter consists of just those popular conventions which are dictated by the demands of practice; there is, there, no pretense at philolophical rigor, and it is no difficult task to discover apparent inconsistencies in the web of human practice. If the Buddhist epistemologist is seeking to

regiment our epistemic practices from within, he is engaged in a hopeless task, for the goal of complete consistency based on secure foundations (Dignāga's thesis of the two prameyas and their pramāṇas) is unattainable. Candrakīrti's critique is meant to bring out this fact, and his description of his strategy is apt. He is a world-elder (lokavṛddha), one who upholds our common-sense conventions as adequate to their assigned tasks. He does so by refuting those arguments which purport to contradict some portion of saṃvṛti. His procedure has its rationale in the fact that we cannot engage in criticism of the accepted epistemic practices unless we are in possession of reliable procedures for testing the truth of our assertions – and such procedures may be developed only by scrutinizing the popular conventions with respect to pramāṇa and prameya. The reforms on Nyāya epistemology proposed by the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika have the goal of rationalizing these conventions, but they do so at the price of rejecting major portions of such background practices, thereby calling into question the legitimacy of the entire enterprise. Any theory which is based on the dismissal of the worldly categories of lakṣya and lakṣaṇa cannot count as a description of our epistemic practices, since there simply are no such practices in the absence of the worldly categories.

The opponent's situation may be summarized in the following dilemma. His theory must stand as either conventional truth or as ultimate truth. If it is meant as the former, 'then it is necessarily to be by means of a lakṣaṇa-possessing lakṣya.' As we saw in the cases of Rāhu and the statue, our linguistic conventions require that there be a subject of predication which is independently characterizable. Since the svalakṣaṇa fails this test, the theory which is based on this notion is unacceptable at the level of saṃvṛti. If, on the other hand, the theory of the Buddhist epistemologist be meant as a description of the ultimate nature of knowledge and reality, 'then there not being two lakṣaṇas because of the non-existence of a lakṣya, how can there be two pramāṇas?' (P.23.23) At the paramārtha level the full force of Nāgārjuna's dialectic becomes operative, and it becomes impossible to make out the existence of any type of entity; thus here there can be no lakṣya. Now it will be recalled that the opponent has not sought to show that in the case of the svalakṣaṇa there is no lakṣya, but rather to show that there lakṣaṇa and lakṣya are one; he accepts the claim that in general a lakṣaṇa requires a lakṣya. Thus his theory fails as well as ultimate truth, since its foundation, the claim that there are two lakṣaṇas, is once again shown to be false.

Finally, the opponent seeks to evade this outcome by calling into question the legitimacy of employing conventional syntax in deciding philosophical issues. He appears to hold that the merely grammatical requirement that there be distinct occurrences of accusative and instrumental in association with a verb is not sufficient to establish that lakṣya and lakṣaṇa cannot be one. Once again, surface grammar need not reflect underlying ontology.

Candrakīrti's response is heavy with sarcasm: 'This is quite unfortunate, you conduct yourself by means of those very words whose functioning is by means

of the verb-case relation and yet do not wish the meaning of a word to be derived from verb, case, etc.; amazing, this practice of yours, which is entirely contradicted by the wish!' (P.23.24–26) Our enquiries will proceed only if we employ some language, and the only one at our disposal has the verb-case relation as a fundamental feature. Of course the opponent may, if he wishes, propose some new language which does not incorporate this feature. But this will ultimately be of no avail, since his new language must be fully translatable into ordinary language, in which case we can hardly say that the one is a better guide to ontology than the other.

In this section Candrakīrti has undercut the foundations of Dignāga's epistemology by attacking the notion of the svalakṣaṇa. If this attack is judged successful, the consequences are farreaching. The opponent is no longer able to deny the existence of pramāṇas other than his favored two. Moreover, since the object of perception cannot be the svalakṣaṇa, the Buddhist epistemologist is no longer in a position to argue against the Nyāya claim that an entity may be the prameya of more than one pramāṇa. The attack on the svalakṣaṇa is also in certain respects akin to modern criticisms of the notion of the epistemically 'given'. It will have been noted that the Mādhyamika singles out for attack the doctrine that the svalakṣaṇa is logically simple in constitution, that lakṣaṇa and lakṣya are one. This may be viewed as tantamount to the denial of the claim that there are objects which are known strictly by 'acquaintance'. If lakṣaṇa and lakṣya must be considered distinct, then it must always be possible to know the lakṣya under some alternative description; an object of knowledge may be considered 'given' only relative to some context of inquiry, never absolutely.

The last point brings us back to Hattori's defense of Dignāga against Candrakīrti's criticism. Hattori claims that since Dignāga's analysis falls wholly within the brackets determined by the interdependent concepts 'pramāṇa' and 'prameya', while Candrakīrti's criticism is based on the claim that ultimately nothing exists, Dignāga's theory is unaffected by this attack. Has Candrakīrti in fact entirely missed the contextual character of Dignāga's analysis? A moment's reflection will show that he has not. Indeed only once does Candrakīrti explicitly employ śūnyavāda, and this is just to close off the possibility of recourse to paramārtha truth when the opponent sees that his position is incompatible with certain fundamental features of saṃvṛti. For the rest, the Mādhyamika confines himself quite strictly to the level of conventional truth, arguing on the basis of linguistic behavior against the possibility of self-cognition, identity of lakṣaṇa and lakṣya, etc. Candrakīrti's basic complaint is not that the opponent's theory violates paramārtha, but that it wrongly introduces the criteria of paramārtha into saṃvṛti, thus doing violence to the conventional and contextual character of saṃvṛti. In making such a complaint, he clearly acknowledges the fact that the opponent's analysis is not meant to yield a description of the ultimate nature of knowledge and reality. Thus Hattori's characterization of this critique cannot be justified.

(3) In this section Candrakīrti takes up Dignāga's definition of perception as kalpanāpoḍha, i.e., as that cognition which is free from conceptual construction. At P.23.28, Candrakīrti states two basic criticisms of Dignāga's account of perception: First, it fails to account for the fact that we ordinarily say such things as 'The pot is perceived;' and second, it does not do justice to what ordinary persons take to be perception, in that it does not lay sufficient stress on the role of the sense-faculties. He then takes up the first, which derives its force from the fact that, on Dignāga's theory, the cognition of a pot involves conceptual construction. This may be seen both from the fact that the notion of a pot is applicable to many individuals, and from the fact that a pot is an extended, enduring entity which is made up of many spatial and temporal parts. In this respect, then, Dignāga's definition does not accord with conventional usage, yet his theory supposedly represents a description of the worldly epistemic practices.

To this the opponent counters, 'The pot-constituting blue, etc., are perceptions, because of [their] being discriminated by the pramāṇa perception. Thus just as the birth of the Buddha is termed "pleasure", making metaphorical transference from the effect to the cause, so the pot, which is determined by the perceptions blue, etc., is termed "pratyakṣa", making metaphorical transference from cause to effect' (P.24.1–3). We may already observe metaphorical transference (upacāra) in the Sanskrit equivalent of such locutions as 'The blue is perceived,' in that, taken literally this would mean, 'The blue is perception.' Here the transference is from pramāṇa to prameya. We may also find cases of metaphorical transference between cause and effect, and insofar as patches of color, etc., are the ultimate constituents of the pot and thus may be said to be its material causes, we can explain 'The pot is perceived' as a case of metaphorical transference from cause to effect.

In response Candrakīrti points out that it is a condition on metaphorical transference that the conjoined terms be such as not normally to occur with one another (asaṃbaddha). For instance, in the expression, 'The birth of the Buddha is pleasure,' there is understood to be metaphorical transference from effect (the pleasure produced by the career of the Buddha) to cause (his birth) just because birth is commonly thought of as painful. No one would ordinarily think of a pot as imperceptible, however, and thus this condition for metaphorical transference is not met.

The opponent now attempts to avoid this difficulty by ascending to the level of paramārtha, where we may say that the pot as such does not exist, being a mere construct of the perceptions of blue, etc. This strategy will not do, however, for now the supposed recipient of metaphorical transference is utterly non-existent. As Candrakīrti point out, 'Sharpness is not metaphorically transferred to the horns of an ass.' Moreover, at this level the perceptionness of blue may also be questioned, since a patch of blue is not to be perceived apart from occurrences of atoms of the mahābhūta earth etc.

It is possible that with this last remark Candrakīrti is pointing out an inconsistency between PS I.1.4cd and *Ālambanaparīkṣā* (AP). In the latter work

Dignāga argues that the external object cannot be the object of knowledge (ālambana). At AP 2a Dignāga gives the criterion of ālambanatva: 'Yo'rthaḥ svābhāsivijñaptimutpādayati, sa hyālambanaṃ yujyate,' i.e., 'What object causes to arise a conception having the form of the object, that is properly said to be the ālambana.' He then argues that neither a saṃghāta (collection) nor a saṃcita (aggregate) of atoms fulfills this criterion. (Individual atoms are themselves imperceptible.) The saṃghāta is not a cause because it is not a real existent (dravyataḥ sattva), it is like the double moon seen by the optically diseased, which is likewise not a cause (AP 2b). The realist opponent then proposes that there is a saṃcitākāra (form of the aggregate) which resides in an aggregate of atoms but is reducible to the ākāras of the individual atoms. Dignāga replies that the ākāra of an atom is no more an object of cognition than the hardness of earth is the object of visual perception. Hence the ākāra of the atom cannot be used to explain the difference between the perception of a pot and that of a cup. While there are doubtless more atoms in the pot than in the cup, the difference between many and few imperceptibles cannot explain the difference between the perceptions of two gross physical objects (AP 3c–4b). Finally, if we seek to account for the differences in the ākāras of pot and cup on the basis of differences in ākāras of perceptible parts of pot and cup such as neck, etc., then since the latter differences cannot be traced to ultimate differences in the ākāras of the atoms themselves, which are all alike in ākāra, it follows that such differences are merely saṃvṛti, having no existence apart from the atoms which constitute the perceptible parts (AP 4c–5d). Thus neither the saṃghāta nor the saṃcitākāra may be thought of as the object of cognition.

As PS 1.1.4cd, Dignāga seeks to reconcile his definition of perception (as that cognition which is free of conceptual construction) with Vasubandhu's assertion at AK I.10 that the objects of the five kinds of sense-perception are aggregates (viz., of atoms). In commenting on this assertion, Vasubandhu points out that since the object of visual perception is color (which according to the Sarvāstivādins is made up of atoms of the mahābhūta), what is perceived by the eye is not the dravya svalakṣaṇa (the form of the atom) but the bāhyāyatanasvalakṣaṇa (the form of the gross physical object), i.e., the form of an aggregate of atoms. In this case it would seem possible to say that the object of perception is a sāmānya, that is, a unity which stands over a multiplicity. This, however, appears to conflict with Dignāga's statement that the object of perception is devoid of conceptual construction, since the sāmānya is the paradigm of a constructed entity. Dignāga responds to this suggestion by pointing out that here 'sāmānya' is being used in the sense of something arising from many atoms, not in the sense of a unity which is conceptually constructed over many distinct entities. From this it is clear that Dignāga takes the object of color-perception to be a saṃcitākāra.

In this case the arguments of AP 3c–5d may be used against the position which Dignāga takes here, the upshot being that the pot-constituting blue has only conventional existence. If we then follow the strategy which was used to

explain the perceptionness of the conventionally existent pot, however, and say that there is perceptionness of the blue by metaphorical transference from the blue-constituting atoms, we must then affirm what is universally denied, namely that atoms are perceived.

Candrakīrti concludes his discussion of this first criticism of the definition of perception with the following remarks:

> Therefore there is non-comprehensiveness of the definition because of the non-inclusion, by the definition, of worldly behavior of this and like sorts. Nor by reference to the knowledge of reality is there posited a perceptionness of pot, etc., and of blue, etc. Rather the perceptionness of pot, etc., is to be ascertained just by worldly convention.
>
> P.24.14–16.

Such objects as pots, and such sense-data as patches of blue, are not counted as percepts because the underlying ultimate reals of which they are constituted are themselves perceived. That such things count as percepts can be explained only by assuming that entities which have merely conventional existence are themselves directly perceived;[15] and this the definition denies. Thus Dignāga's definition cannot account for such locutions as 'The pot is perceived,' and is in this respect defective.

Candrakīrti next cites with approval an etymological explanation of the term 'pratyakṣa' (perception):

> That object which is before the senses is pratyakṣa because of the expression of the sense 'perceptible object' in the word. 'perception'; [it] having been constructed as 'the sense-organ is gone toward that' [*pratigatam akṣam* asmin], the perceptionness of blue, etc., is proven. Perceptionness is attributed to the cognition which is the determinant of that because of the causal role of perception, like the grass-chaff fire.
>
> P.24.21–23.

On this derivation of the term, the locution, 'The pot is pratyakṣa' is easily explained, since the term refers directly to the object of perception. This account also enables us to understand the designation of perceptual cognition as 'pratyakṣa': Here once again we have a case of metaphorical transference from effect to cause, as in 'grass-chaff fire'. Not so felicitous, however, is Dignāga's derivation of the term in the work *Nyāyamukha*:[16] 'akṣamakṣaṃ prati vartate iti pratyakṣaṃ,' i.e., 'Pratyakṣa is so called because it is concerned with each of the senses.' Candrakīrti objects that this derivation cannot be correct, 'because of the non-objectness of the sense-faculty of that cognition, and the objectness of the object. For then it [pratyakṣa] would be "prativiṣaya" ["belonging to each object"] or "pratyartha" ["belonging to each thing"]' (P.24.24–25). This account suggests that the sense-faculty is the object of perception, which is clearly

wrong. If we followed the principle on which this derivation is based, we should expect perception to be called 'prativiṣaya' or 'pratyartha', since perception is that cognition which is concerned with each object or thing.

Candrakīrti now considers the derivation presented by Dignāga at PS I.1.4ab. There it is granted that both sense and object are necessary components of perceptual cognition. Dignāga explains, however, that perception is named after the sense organ (akṣa) rather than the object because the organ plays the role of uncommon cause (asādhāraṇa hetu) in perception: The same entity (e.g., a patch of blue) may serve as object in both visual perception and mental perception (mānasa pratyakṣa), and one object may be perceived by many individuals. Thus it is the sense, not the object, which serves to individuate particular instances of perception. And in general, designation is by means of what is uncommon: A barley-shoot has earth among its causes, but since this is true of rice-shoots as well, it is designated by reference to what is not common to other types of shoot, the barley seed.[17]

Candrakīrti attacks this explanation of the term on the grounds that it is inconsistent with Dignāga's definition of perception. Since on the latter's theory the pramāṇas are to be defined in terms of their respective prameyas, the nature of the pramāṇa being determined through the copying of the form of its object, the definition of perception must be by means of the object, not the sense. In this case the consideration of mental perception can be turned against Dignāga: 'Consciousness being designated by means of its object, the division of consciousness as sixfold – consciousness of color, etc. – would not be explained, because of the operation of manovijñāna on an object which is one and the same as that of visual consciousness, etc.' (P.24.29–25.2) If the opponent then objects that his account of the derivation of the term is merely meant to explicate the popular conception of perception, so as to throw light on the relation between this and the philosophically rigorous conception of perception, and not to express some profound philosophical truth concerning perception, Candrakīrti will reply that the epistemologist is hardly in a position to discuss the popular conception of perception.

> This word 'pratyakṣa' is established in the world. It is, however, used by us just as it is in the world. That derivation [of yours] being made only by setting aside the correct worldly categories, however, what would be established is the setting aside of an established word. And it thus follows that there would be no perception.
>
> P.25.10–12.

By his insistence on the definition of perception as kalpanāpoḍha, the opponent reveals himself to be concerned with something which no one but a philosopher would recognize as perceptual cognition. This fundamental error having been made, no amount of forced etymologizing can bring the theory into line with established practice. If a pot cannot be said to be perceived, then it is futile to seek

to explain why the accepted term makes special reference to the sense faculty; for in that case what is ordinarily understood by 'perception' does not exist.

Candrakīrti is not at his best in this debate over the derivation of 'pratyakṣa'. A final rejoinder seems particularly unfair. At P.25.12–14, he claims that in the derivation which Dignāga has taken over from Vasubandhu, the prefix 'prati' expresses the sense of universality (vīsvārtha); thus there can be no perceptionness in a single kṣaṇa of the sense. 'And if there is the absence of perceptionness in these taken individually, there would be none of them collectively.' While the conclusion would, on Yogācāra-Sautrāntika tenets, follow from the premises, there is no reason to believe that Dignāga intends 'prati' to have this force. (Indeed it is far from clear that Candrakīrti has not misinterpreted Vasubandhu.) This debate does, nonetheless help establish the respective positions of the opponents with regard to the relation between conventional practice and philosophical theory. The Buddhist epistemologist appears to hold that the former must either be made to conform to the latter, or else be jettisoned. The principal criterion to be employed in theory-construction is logical consistency; conformity with verbal conventions is always a desideratum, but never a deciding feature. The Mādhyamika, on the other hand, holds that in the absence of conventional linguistic behavior there are no objects available for philosophical scrutiny. Given this fundamental outlook, it is natural that he should take adequacy to our ordinary linguistic intuitions as the sole criterion for testing philosophical theories. And this test Dignāga's theory clearly fails.

Finally, Candrakīrti notes that Dignāga (at PS I.1.4ab) cites scriptural authority (āgama) in support of his definition of perception: 'Cakṣurvijñāna-sāmaṇgī nīlaṃ jānāti no tu nīlamiti,' i.e., 'A complete visual consciousness produces [the sensation of] blue but not [the knowledge] "It is blue".' Dignāga takes this Abhidharma passage to show that the Buddhist tradition supports his distinction between perception and inference as exclusively concerned with the unconstructed object and the constructed object respectively. Candrakīrti points out that such support is not forthcoming from this citation 'because [its intent is] the teaching of the inanimateness of the five kinds of sense-faculty consciousness' (P.25.18). Here the intention is to demonstrate that vijñāna ('consciousness') skandha is not the sort of thing which could qualify as the ātman or knowing subject. This is shown by pointing out that sensory consciousness is not by itself capable of producing what we should consider full cognition of the sensory object; for this, the faculty of conceptualization, namely saṃjñā skandha, must also be brought into play. While Abhidharma psychology holds that vijñāna plays a necessary role in the subjective component of cognition, it is not thought to be sufficient for the production of cognition. This should not be taken to mean that there are two distinct species of cognition, non-conceptual and conceptual. Rather, it means that every instance of cognition involves the cooperation of a number of subjective elements, none of which may alone be said to be cognizant, and thus none of which may properly be thought of as having the properties of an ātman.

Candrakīrti concludes his discussion of perception with the following summary of the salient points of the popular understanding:

> Thus according to the world, if there is a lakṣya, be it of the nature of svalakṣaṇa or sāmānyalakṣaṇa, it is in any event evident because of its being manifestly perceived, hence perception [i.e., the percept] is determined, together with the cognition which has that as its object. While there is no perceptionness of the double moon, etc., with respect to the cognition of the optically sound, there is indeed perceptionness with respect to the optically diseased.
>
> P.25.19–21.

The last part of this passage may seem odd, since obviously the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika does not want to deny that those with cataracts have optical stimulation appropriate to the seeing of two moons. The point here is rather that we do ordinarily speak of perceiving an illusion. This undercuts a major argument of the opponent against the notion that the sāmānyalakṣaṇa is perceived; for he argues that because the sāmānyalakṣaṇa is a fiction and is thus unreal, it is incapable of causing to arise a cognition having its form, since no unreal has causal efficacy. The double moon is likewise unreal, however, yet we do speak of it as being perceived.

Candrakīrti concludes his discussion of epistemology by paraphrasing the Nyāya definitions of inference, verbal testimony (āgama), and comparison (upamāna). The definition of perception is doubtless omitted because at this point it would be redundant. He then comments:

> And these are established in mutual dependence: There being the pramāṇas, there are the objects which are prameyas; there being the objects which are prameyas, there are pramāṇas. Not at all, however, is there a proof of pramāṇa and prameya which is self-existent [i.e., absolute]. Therefore the worldly should be [described] just as it is [ordinarily] experienced.
>
> P.25.26–28.

While the opponent agrees that 'pramāṇa' and 'prameya' are mutually dependent terms, he goes astray is supposing it possible to construct an overarching theory which accounts for all cognitive behavior in a rigorous and elegant fashion. While his theory is internally consistent and does result in an apparently satisfactory explanation of the attainment of human ends through cognition, its departures from common sense – the notion of the svalakṣaṇa, the definition of perception, the claim that the object is immanent to cognition, the doctrine of self-cognition, etc. – are so many and so fundamental that its very comprehensibility is called into question. This might not seem a telling criticism, since counter-intuitiveness does not ordinarily count against the theories of the natural

sciences. Here the situation is quite different, however, for the theory in question purports to explain not a natural phenomenon but the phenomenon of human knowledge. Thus there arises the problem of theoretical standpoint: How are we to assess the epistemologist's claims, if we cannot trust our common-sense intuitions concerning the means of knowledge and their objects? It is just this question which underlies, for instance, Candrakīrti's sarcastic response to the suggestion that the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika does not accept the syntax of ordinary language as a guide to the truth. In this enterprise, any radical departure from accepted practice will leave us devoid of a standpoint from which to make knowledge-claims. Thus we must be content merely to describe our epistemic behavior as it is found in the world, employing in our describing activity just those practices which are at the same time the object of our description.

Candrakīrti seems to suggest that any attempt at constructing an overarching theory of knowledge – at presenting a unified account of the structure of appearance – will run up against this problem, will inevitably diverge from accepted epistemic practice to an unacceptable degree. This suggestion would appear to be implicit in the claim that we must content ourselves, in epistemology, with a description of worldly behavior. It might be thought that his ultimate endorsement of the Nyāya theory of the pramāṇas, and his apparent acceptance of the Nyāya doctrine of pramāṇa-saṃplava (the doctrine that different pramāṇas may cognize the same prameya) show him to be far less pessimistic about the possibility of a systematic theory of knowledge than I am making him out to be. The Naiyāyikas do, after all, engage in a certain amount of speculative metaphysics on the basis of their epistemology (for example, in their doctrine of abhāva). I think, however, that we must take Candrakīrti's endorsement of certain Nyāya theories as less than a wholesale endorsement of their entire system. It is clear that he takes their account of the four pramāṇas as a model description of our epistemic practices. The attractiveness of their epistemology to the Mādhyamika is heightened if it can be taken in the extensionalistic and fallibilistic sense which I presented in MCE I. It must be recalled, however, that the Naiyāyika does not accept the Madhyamaka distinction between saṃvṛti and paramārtha. This fact makes it necessary, from the standpoint of the Mādhyamika, that the Nyāya account of the pramāṇas be separated off from the rest of the system; otherwise there is the danger that endorsement of their account of the pramāṇas will be taken as acceptance of, e.g., their doctrine of categories as an ultimately true description of reality. While the Naiyāyika might accept the application of fallibilism to the theoretical superstructure of his epistemology, he is unlikely to welcome the suggestion that much of his metaphysics must be scrapped and the remainder taken as a necessarily incomplete description of the common-sense ontology.

I am claiming that Candrakīrti is at least skeptical concerning the possibility of a complete, systematic account of the nature of knowledge. If this is correct, what reason might Candrakīrti have for such an attitude? Any answer to this question must be speculative, since he here confines himself to an attack on the

Yogācāra-Sautrāntika account. I think it is possible, however, to extract from this critique at least the outlines of a Madhyamaka response to this question. Candrakīrti should, I feel, be taken as holding that the possibility of systematic epistemology is inextricably bound up with the possibility of metaphysics. We have seen an extreme example of this in Dignāga's system, which requires the doctrine of the svalakṣaṇa; but I think he would say that in general anything other than a provisional, fallibilistic account of the nature of the pramāṇas requires some general theory of the nature of the prameyas. Only an extrinsic proof of the pramāṇas will do, and the more nearly such a proof approaches the philosophical ideal of systematicity, rigor, and consistency, the greater will be the gap between the requisite theory of prameyas and our common-sense ontology. This is so for the simple reason that 'the reality of the worldly categories is not from analysis.' The ontology to which we are committed by our use of ordinary language is not sufficiently determinate to yield unambiguous answers to the questions of the metaphysician. The pragmatic demands which shape ordinary language require an underlying framework sufficiently flexible that the resulting instrument is adaptable to all the various uses to which language may be put. When we seek to systematize this framework through the application of purely logical criteria, we necessarily do violence to our common-sense ontology. As Candrakīrti says elsewhere, in response to an opponent who wishes to construct a general theory of causality, 'The world, not undertaking to analyze whether [production] is "from itself", "from another", and the like, goes no further than to acknowledge that the effect arises from the cause' (P.9.5). Thus the Madhyamaka position would appear to be that it is not sufficient to attach to one's theory of knowledge the proviso that it is formulated entirely at the level of conventional truth; if one's theory purports to be more than a provisional description of conventional epistemic practices, if there is about it any pretense at systematicity, rigor, and theoretical elegance, it will inevitably come up against the fact that no metaphysical theory can be fully adequate to the nature of the world.

Notes

1 *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 8, pp. 307–335.

2 The translation of a section of *Prasannapadā* on which the present paper is based was prepared under the direction of Prof. J. N. Mohanty during an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers on the topic of Indian logical and epistemological theories, held at the University of Oklahoma in June–August, 1979. I wish to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Prof. Mohanty and the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

3 *Prasannapadā* (hereafter P) is Candrakīrti's commentary on Nāgārjuna's major work *Mūlamadhyamakakārikas* (MMK). The text is found in *Madhyamakaśāstra of Nāgārjuna (Mūlamadhyamakakārikas) with the Commentary: Prasannapadā by Candrakīrti*, (ed.), P. Vaidya (Dharbanga: Mithila Institute, 1960). All further citations will be incorporated, in parentheses, into the text.

4 Yamaguchi Susumu, *Hannyashisōshi* (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1973), p. 63.

5 Cf. Paul M. Williams, "Some Aspects of Language and Construction in the Madhyamaka," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 8, pp. 1–34.
6 At least according to the Prāsaṅgika wing of the Madhyamakas. Such Svātantrikạs as Bhāvaviveka might want to reply that their arguments for śūnyavāda are all limited to the scope of saṃvṛti, so that no inconsistencies arise.
7 *Dignāga, On Perception*, (ed. and trans.), Hattori Masaaki (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 76, n. 10.
8 Ibid.
9 Theodor Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), p. 151.
10 Satkari Mookerji, "The Absolutist's Standpoint in Logic," *Nava-Nalanda Mahāvihāra Research Publication*, vol. 1 (Calcultta: Calcutta Press Private Ltd., 1957), p. 47.
11 Given the ineffability of the svalakṣaṇa, this would necessarily remain unspecified; the conditions of ineffability are not, however, violated by the assertion that the svalakṣaṇa is characterized by *some* lakṣaṇa.
12 *Madhyāntavibhāga* I.8. This was also the position of the later Yogācāra-Sautrāntikas and, according to the Tibetans, of the Vaibhāṣikas as well. Cf. Dharmottara, Nyāyabindutika I.10; Herbert V. Guenther, *Buddhist Thought in Theory and Practice* (Boulder, Colo.: Shambala Publications, 1971), p. 63.
13 For another interpretation of the 'Rāhu' passage, cf. Malcolm D. Eckel, "Bhāvaviveka and the early Mādhyamika theories of language," Philosophy East and West, vol. 28, pp. 323–337, especially pp. 332–5. He takes Candrakīrti's opponent to be not a Yogācāra-Sautrāntika but the Svātantrika Mādhyamika Bhāvaviveka. He is careful to note, however, that this interpretation derives from the Tibetan commentator Tson-kha-pa.
14 This position would seem to violate the original condition that lakṣya and lakṣaṇa are identical, but perhaps what the opponent has in mind is a kind of sense-reference distinction: While 'earth' and 'hardness' refer to one and the same entity, they have different meanings, such that the former is required to complete the sense of the latter.
15 Here 'directly perceived' is meant to contrast with 'having perceptionness through metaphorical transference', and not with 'perceived via internal representation'. Candrakīrti might well want to endorse the direct realism of the Naiyāyikas, but he does not here take a stand on this issue.
16 Cf. Hattori, p. 77, n. 11, for citations.
17 In presenting Dignāga's PS derivation, Candrakīrti cites neither of Dignāga's reasons: mental perception, and perception of one object by many individuals. Instead he cites the fact that perceptual consciousness varies in dependence on the strength or weakness of the organ; it is this which supposedly makes the sense the uncommon cause. This fact is not cited by Dignāga, but it does figure in Vasubandhu's derivation of 'pratyakṣa' at AK 1.45ab. If this is actually a case of mistaken attribution, however, it does not affect Candrakīrti's criticism.

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ON THE ABHIDHARMA ONTOLOGY

Paul M. Williams

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The question "What is there?" is clearly not answered by pointing to everything and indicating the existence of that thing as one points. Firstly this would be an infinite process, and secondly there are many things such as the number two which cannot be pointed at. We can talk of many things which we cannot encounter in experience and some, such as mystics, maintain that we can have an experience of things which we cannot talk about. There are tables and there are colours, there are rivers and there is heat. All of these can be spoken of, but not all can be shown to exist by pointing. As the Sarvāstivādin Saṃghabhadra realised so clearly, if everything exists then entities exist often in radically different ways. The philosopher is interested not in listing but rather in classifying and judging the claims of certain sorts of the given to have included within them existents.

The paradox of the ontological question lies here: There are things which we can consider, talk about, perhaps read about and in many respects claim to be familiar with but which nevertheless are generally considered not to exist. How can we refer to something which does not exist, even for the purpose of denying or refuting it? Can there really be such a thing as a true denial of existence? The impossibility of referring to and negating nonexistent entities was common in Indian philosophical texts. For example the Naiyāyika opponent observes in the *Vigrahavyāvartanīvṛtti* that negation is only apprehended of an existent (*sat*) which is nonoccurrent in a particular locus, as when we deny that there is a pot in the house.[1] The Hindu grammarians asserted that negation is only possible on the basis of mental existence, a position familiar in Western thought and vigourously attacked by Quine.[2] The Naiyāyika Udayana suggested that language and disputation relating to a being who has never at any time been apprehended by anyone "results from some outrageous perversion."[3]

Moreover how can distinctions be made between nonexistents? Inasmuch as we refer to Cerberus *and* Pegasus so we refer to two different entities. Although we can follow Frege in accepting that two names for the same thing can have a different sense while still having the same referent,[4] nevertheless we would not say, for example, "The morning star and the evening star exist." To the extent to

which we link two names together with 'and' followed by the attribution or denial of existence so we recognise that the referents of the two names are different. But how can there be difference between two entities both of which do not exist? In that we distinguish *x* from *y* it must be possible to predicate something of *x* which cannot be predicated of *y* and vice-versa. Such differences of predication require criteria by which *x* can be distinguished from *y* and the minimal criteria can only be provided by differentiating descriptions. But how, it might be asked, can there be anything but a totally arbitrary and therefore impossible distinction drawn between two entities which are nonexistent and therefore complete blanks? Is a distinction to be made here between entities which are impossible – logical contradictories such as the square circle, for example – mere unexampled cases such as the hare's horn which may or may not occur in the future, those things which are fairly certain to occur such as the sun rising tomorrow, and those like William the Conqueror which have occurred in the past but will presumably not occur again? How can we say of an historical person such as William the Conqueror that he does not now exist? How can language be used without referents at all? The commentary by Mañjuśrīkīrti to the *Samādhirājasūtra* observes quite simply that what does not exist is ineffable, nothing can be said of it.[5] But this does not help to explain why it is that everyday life can nevertheless proceed quite effectively while continuing to talk about entities which are apparently nonexistent. Can we conclude from what Mañjuśrīkīrti says that since we do talk about apparent nonexistents so they are in fact existent?

If on the other hand we maintain in opposition to the everyday attitude that all which is presented by memory, perception or imagination exists then we must be prepared to introduce different sorts of existence. For example we may refer to unactualised possibles, subsistents and so on which exist but not in the *same way* as the chair I am at present sitting upon. Or we may speak of existence in the mind, but all these devices, as Quine and before him Brentano pointed out, somewhat expand our universe beyond what it is normally considered to contain.[6] Indeed it is by no means clear by what criteria we can talk of different *sorts* of existence. Aristotle suggested that there are as many different kinds of existence as there are categories, but the notion that two entities exist in different ways is itself paradoxical, for existence would not seem to be the sort of thing which could be divided into different types. And in what sense does existence itself exist?[7]

The name "Sarvāstivāda" – an alternative and perhaps less formal name for the Vaibhāṣika school – literally means the 'doctrine that all exists'. I want to examine here not the recognition and categorisation of *existents*, that is, *what* exists, that characteristic taxonomic activity of the Abhidharma as regards those elements the system postulates as having primary existence (*dharmas*), but rather the Sarvāstivādin's attempt to construct and demarcate an ontological table of *types* of existence.[8] This account will be based mainly on the *Abhidharmakośa* and its commentaries, particularly the orthodox *Nyāyānusāra* of

Saṃghabhadra, which is extant only in Chinese and sections of which have been translated into French by Louis de la Vallée Poussin.[9]

The canonical formula of "*sarvam anityam*" – all is impermanent – was undoubtedly a formula of considerable soteriological significance, but it also claimed to be a philosophical truth. That is, it was not thought of solely as a prescriptive statement recommending an attitude to the world which would lead to liberation from the rounds of rebirth, but rather as *also* a descriptive statement about the way of things. The universality of the term 'all' was however problematic since an evident hierarchy of types of existence necessitated either a restriction of the formula solely to the category of primary existents – only those entities given in sensual experience are impermanent for example – or a reinterpretation of "impermanent". The spatio-temporal orientation of the notion of impermanence obviously entailed difficulties with different levels of abstraction and indeed with the truth of the formula itself. In particular soteriological and epistemological considerations combined with reference to the ontological status of past and future entities. Fundamentally the problem was one of the epistemological and linguistic operation with nonexistents, but the closed and permanent nature of the past, combined with the semi-permanent future status of unrealised possibles rendered the problem religiously as well as philosophically acute.

The rationale behind the Sarvāstivādin tenet of the continued existence of past and future *dharmas* lay in the impossibility of conceiving firstly a nonexistent intentional object of a conscious act and secondly the causal efficacy of something which doesn't exist. This was made quite clear by the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* when it explained that "Consciousness (*vijñāna*) occurs if the objective correlate (*viṣaya*) exists, not otherwise. If past and future were nonexistent then consciousness would have a nonexistent as an objective support (referent – *ālambana*). Therefore consciousness would not occur because its objective support does not exist . . . (Furthermore) if the past is nonexistent then how could there be in the future the effect of good and bad deeds? For at the time when the effect arises the present cause of its fruition (*vipākahetu*) does not exist. Therefore the Vaibhāṣikas maintain that past and future exist."[10]

Philosophically the Sarvāstivādin doctrine was essentially built on the intentionality of consciousness, the theory that all consciousness must be conscious of something, combined with an *à priori* assumption that therefore the intentional object must exist. This doctrine of intentionality was present in the very earliest strata of Buddhist epistemology in the theory of the twelve *āyatanas* – sense bases and their objects in the form of sense-data corresponding in type to each of the six bases – and the doctrine of the *dhātus*, the preceding twelve *āyatanas* plus six sorts of resulting consciousness.[11] The emphasis on the existential status of the intentional object was made possible by a causal theory of cognition, requiring the causal dependence of perceptual consciousness upon its objective referent. The Sarvāstivāda was fully aware of the canonical support for its teaching, for the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* observes, "It has been said that

consciousness arises depending on two. Which two? Eye and form (*rūpa*) and so on, up to mind (*manas*) and mental objects (*dharma*). If past and future do not exist then consciousness, for which those are the objective support, would not arise in dependence upon two. Thus that past and future exist is proved by Scripture."[12] The Theravādin Buddhaghosa maintained in his *Atthasālinī* that consciousness may arise without paying attention (*āvajja*) but not without objective support (*ārammaṇa*)",[13] while Saṃghabhadra asserts (trans. Poussin), "De même que la connaissance ce naît pas faute de support, de même, si l'objet manque, elle ne naît pas; puisque ces deux sont ensemble les conditions génératrices de la connaissance."[14]

Franz Brentano, in adopting the old mediaeval term "*intentio*" for the relationship between consciousness and its object[15] argued that this intentionality of consciousness, the fact that consciousness stretches beyond itself, as it were, towards an object is the most important characterising factor which distinguishes mental from physical entities. For Brentano the subject-object relationship is the minimum condition necessary for the existence of a mental act:[16]

> Every mental phenomenon is characterised by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as an object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way . . . The intentional inexistence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We can, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves.[17]

Although consciousness is consciousness of something Brentano emphatically differentiated between being an object of consciousness and being an object in the sense that the entity has external objective existence. A unicorn, for example, is for Brentano a particular individual thing although it doesn't exist. Since there can be a mental act directed towards a unicorn so Brentano spoke of the 'inexistence' of the intentional object.[18] Nevertheless this didn't prevent Brentano from feeling obliged in his earlier thought to accept the existence of *entia rationis*, that is, to give a quasi-existence to the objects of the intentional act even when thinking of fictionals.

One of Brentano's presuppositions, recurrent in Indian thought, was that the subject-object relationship is indeed a *relationship* and must as such have two really existing termini. Jan Srzednicki has noted, "He was, in effect, assuming that whenever one speaks of a relation one refers to the same sort of thing. Relations differ from one another but whenever we say "There is a relationship R between termini T and T_i", we are referring to something that clearly falls within

the class of relations. There is a certain set of characteristics that appertains to all members of this class and one of them is that the relation implies both the termini, both of them real in at least some sense."[19] A similar unstated presupposition has been maintained by Broad to underly McTaggart's contention that the B-series – before, contemporaneous with and after – could not constitute a process of qualitative change without the A-determinations past, present and future,[20] and can perhaps be traced back at least as far as the rather vague observation in Book 7 of Aristotle's *Categories* that "correlatives are thought to come into existence simultaneously."[21] But *Aristotle* goes on to notice that this is only generally true, and the case is different for knowledge and the object of knowledge, at least one sort of intentional relationship. Here there can be no knowledge without the object, although the object can exist without being known. It is a reflection of the latent Cartesianism in post-Renaissance Western thought that Brentano's subjective epistemological standpoint contrasts the certainty of the subjective terminus of the intentional relationship with the positive uncertainty of the objective, a reversal in emphasis from the Aristotelean position in spite of Brentano's own avowed Aristoteleanism.

Brentano was fully aware of the criticism Quine makes of *entia rationis*: they multiply the number of existents to infinity. Such a position seemed to be entailed by the doctrine of intentionality, but subsequently Brentano adopted a reist position,[22] arguing like Quine that when we think of something we think of a real thing not a mental object, and that *entia rationis* in the case of fictionals are the result of a mistaken linguistic doctrine, the view that a name requires a referent in order to be meaningful.[23] He abandoned the presupposition that a mental act in such cases is a relationship requiring the existence of both termini and felt that the so-called fictional object could be analysed away by means of a linguistic and epistemological analysis. He did not however take the radical step of his contemporary Fritz Mauthner in holding that all relationships are themselves simply the products of language,[24] and it was left to Maurice Merleau-Ponty to develop the doctrine of intentionality inherited from Brentano through Husserl so as to eventually deny altogether the presupposition of Cartesian dualism implied in the dual subject-object relationship, "the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world ... We are in the world ... The belief in an absolute mind, or in a world in itself detached from us is no more than a rationalisation of this primordial faith."[25]

That the Sarvāstivāda accepted without question the impossibility of a relationship where one of the termini is nonexistent is affirmed by Saṃghabhadra. He observes (trans. Poussin), 'En effet, il n'y a pas de relation possible de l'existant avec le non-existant."[26] To take just one example from a Brahmanical source, we find Śaṃkara stating in his *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣadbhāṣya* that "the relationship (*sambandha*) between an existent (*sat*) and a nonexistent (*asat*) cannot be verbally signified, since there is no such thing."[27] Such a principle was fundamental for Śaṃkara inasmuch as it obviated the need to explain the relationship between *Brahman* and *māyā* – Absolute and phenomenal illusion. This is of

course a crucial problem of both philosophical and soteriological dimension for any Absolutism. This impossibility of a relationship between existent and nonexistent also underlay many of Nāgārjuna's criticisms, particularly his critique of causality. Undoubtedly the same rationale at least partially explains the Sarvāstivādin position as regards the ethical question of the continued existence of past and future acts. But it is worth noting that the problem is not *solved* simply by maintaining that it is not necessary for all relationships to have two really existing termini, for the original problem of intentional reference was how it is possible to have an intentional act directed towards a nonexistent, and to reply that one of the termini need not exist in itself does no more than restate the problem. The mistake of the Sarvāstivāda lay not *just* in maintaining that all relationships require two existing termini but rather in an inadequate analysis of the intentional situation, which is in fact no *relationship* at all inasmuch as it requires two termini, be they existing or nonexisting.

It was Saṃghabhadra who developed and rendered coherent the Sarvāstivāda as a defensible philosophical position largely in response to the Sautrāntika critique from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. He observed that controversies between the two sides had been continuing for some time, scriptural quotes and rational arguments had been employed by both factions and that (trans. Poussin) "ils produisent ainsi les uns et les autres, une grande masse de calamité (*ādīnava*)." It is significant that in opposition to the controversy between two partisan factions he opposed not silence but Truth, a Truth which happened to coincide with the tenet of one faction but which nevertheless stood above such factional controversy. "C'est pourquoi je produis grandement bonne résolution (*samyakprahāṇa*); en conformité avec une saine considération des choses, j'établis que le passé-futur, quoique différent du présent, n'est pas absolument inexistant. Le passé-futur n'est pas existant à l'instar du présent, mais il n'est pas inexistant à l'instar d'une corne de cheval: j'établis que le passé et le futur existent en leur "nature propre" (*t'i*). – Seules ces vues sont conformes au système correct de l'Abhidharma."[28]

Saṃghabhadra's position is essentially to differentiate between existence-as-present, existence in the way in which past and future *dharmas* exist, and absolute non-existence. By absolute nonexistence is meant here something which has never existed and, it is maintained, never will exist such as a horse's horn. In giving examples of absolutely nonexistent entities Indian thinkers never clearly distinguished between logical contradictories and merely unexampled terms, probably due to the fact that linguistics rather than mathematics served to provide the impetus behind philosophical change and so the notion of analytical necessity was not clearly formulated. Nevertheless there is some indication that the early Madhyamaka, for example, was prepared to consider the horse's or hare's horn as merely an unexampled term the occurrence of which was not actually a logical contradiction. In the *Akutobhayā*, an early commentary on the *Madhyamakakārikā* attributed to Nāgārjuna, it is observed that "if a non-originated entity is produced then it would follow that whatever objects

(*don/artha*) are nonoccurrent would also all originate. Here enlightenment (*byang chub/bodhi*) which has not originated would occur in the case of ignorant foolish people and ... likewise it would follow that there also originates such nonoccurrents as the horn of a hare, a horse and so on. Such is not acceptable."[29] Even though Saṃghabhadra's strategy is to force his opponent to admit that it is not the case that all 'nonexistents' can be placed on existentially the same level, it is fundamental therefore to appreciate that his argument requires the horse's horn to be an example of something which as a matter of fact will never occur. If it will occur then our example becomes one of a future entity and therefore will not serve to differentiate between an absolutely nonexistent entity and a future entity which – as a future entity – Saṃghabhadra wishes to maintain does exist. Saṃghabhadra is handicapped by not using as his example a logical contradiction such as the son of a barren woman, but we must take it as given that he is not concerned with a purely logical possibility but with something which is as a matter of fact an eternally unexampled term. He does not consider Hume's problem of how we can infer from past nonoccurrence to future nonoccurrence, although a variant of this argument was used in India by the Cārvākas in their refutation of the inductively based Naiyāyika inferential schemata.[30]

In indicating the phenomenological distinction between absolute nonexistence and the sort of nonexistence pertaining to past and future entities Saṃghabhadra was in a position to conflate existence and what I will call provisionally 'quasi-nonexistence', in terms of an opposition to absolute nonexistence. Although such an argument was not used it seems likely that underlying this conflation was the axiom that distinctions cannot be made between nonexistents and that therefore absolutely nonexistent and quasi-nonexistent entities cannot form two sub-groups of the null class. As Āryadeva observed in his *Śataśāstra* with reference to space (*ākāṣa*), what has no characteristics does not exist,[31] and we know of the existence of a *dharma* by virtue of its characteristic.[32] In the *Dvadaśamukhaśāstra*, attributed to Nāgārjuna, it is said that a thing is nonexistent apart from its characteristic and thus cannot be characterised.[33] I have already mentioned the contention of Mañjuśrīkīrti that nonexistents are ineffable, and thus there was lacking any basis for differentiation between nonexistents. Linguistic difficulties associated with such a position prompted the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* to suggest that even a nonexistent could be an object of consciousness inasmuch as it is known as nonexistent, while the Hindu Grammarians maintained that even a nonexistent such as a hare's horn was existent inasmuch as it was spoken of, distinguishing between *mukhyasattā* – primary existence – and *upacārasattā*, mental and metaphorical existence, *entia rationis*, the result of language. For them even the hare's horn appears *as though* it has primary existence due to being a linguistic referent.[34]

If the impossibility of differentiation between nonexistents necessitated that Saṃghabhadra conflate existence and quasi-nonexistence then it became incumbent upon him to construct an ontological table of at least two members so distinguished that the two sorts of existence could not become absorbed into each

other and could be clearly differentiated. This was fundamental, for he had based his ontological distinctions on the phenomenological difference between three sorts of existential status that could pertain to an entity, and to absorb existence and quasi-nonexistence would be to deny the given and also render *dharmas* eternal, the very criticism of the Sarvāstivāda position which was both philosophically and soteriologically unacceptable. His position was thus far weak, since to speak of past and future as existent – albeit existent in a different way from present and thus in a different way from what is normally considered to be existent – is only verbally to differentiate past and future from nonexistence. In the Indian context his sole argument rested on a threefold phenomenological distinction combined with the impossibility of distinguishing between nonexistents. The extent to which the Sarvāstivāda adopted the phenomenological position of truth to the given is debatable, although it was far less so than in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Kumārilabhaṭṭa's Mīmāṃsā, for example. Much of Indian thinking evinced what Strawson has called 'revisionary metaphysics', that is, rather than describing the structure of the given it was concerned with producing a better structure. In opposition to the Sarvāstivāda an opponent could simply maintain that the threefold distinction happened to be the byproduct of a particular epistemological, linguistic or historical situation which does not reflect reality at all. The fact that language enables us to talk in such a manner which seems to differentiate between sorts of nonexistence necessitates either silence as true to reality or linguistic revision as an aid to philosophic understanding. It must be admitted that in going beyond his initial position through a definition of existence and the construction of an ontological table of types of existence and their interrelationships nevertheless Saṃghabhadra never answers such an opponent. But it is by no means clear whether he could or should.

Some teachers, Saṃghabhadra observes, defined existence as (trans. Poussin), "être né et ne pas être détruit", but such a definition would not do since it begged the question, being the definition normally given for the present. That such was the Sarvāstivādin definition of the present is clear from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, "Here, past form (*rūpa*) is that which has ceased due to impermanence, future is that which has not originated and present (*pratyutpanna*) is what has originated but has not yet ceased",[35] while Candrakīrti in his *Prasannapadā* represents the opponent as maintaining that "because the self-essence (*svabhāva*) of an entity has originated and ceased it is called 'past', originated and not ceased, 'present', and where the self-essence (*ātmabhāva*) has not been apprehended, 'future'."[36] It is to be noted here that to define *existence* as 'originated and not ceased' is scarcely adequate anyway, since it is tautologous if cessation is taken as going out of existence and false if it is not.

Saṃghabhadra offers as his definition, "Le véritable caractère de l'existant est d'engendrer l'idée (*buddhi*) en qualité d'objet", that is, to be is to generate a cognition taking that object as its referent.[37] Through this definition of existence Saṃghabhadra thought that the problem of past and future existence could easily be solved.[38] In a Buddhist context his position was helped by a hidden premiss,

that of the impossibility of a nonexistent exerting causal efficacy. For Saṃghabhadra to be is to cause an apprehension; if an entity causes an apprehension taking that entity as its referent so the referent, as cause, must be an existent. This causal explanation of perception belonged to Buddhist thought from its inception.[39] Nevertheless such a position is unconvincing without also holding that a perception must take a referent as cause; a referential cause of cognition is axiomatic to Sarvāstivāda causal and cognitive theory. The occurrence of a perception thus guarantees the existence of its referent. In the *Nyāyānusāra* Saṃghabhadra observes:

> Les Dārṣṭāntikas disent que l'existant et le non-existant, tous deux, sont objet qui engendre l'idée. Cela n'est pas exact, car la *buddhi*, idée (ou representation ou *cogitatio*), correspond à un *bodhya*, objet (ou représenté ou *cogitandum*): un *bodhya* est nécessaire pour qu'il y ait une *buddhi*. On donne le nom de *buddhi* à ce qui atteint (*prāpnoti*) un objet (*viṣaya*): si le "à atteindre" manque quel sera l'atteignant? La nature propre (*svabhāva*) de la connaissance (*vijñāna*) est de "saisir" l'objet (*viṣaya*); si le "à connaitre" (*vijñeya*) manque, que connaitra la connaissance? Donc la connaissance "à objet nonexistant" de notre adversaire ne peut être nommée "connaissance" puisqu'elle n'a pas de "connaissable".[40]

This argument from intentionality was often repeated by Saṃghabhadra, and also played a part in his proof of the real existence of *nirvāṇa*.[41] There can be little doubt that he saw it as the principal argument for the Sarvāstivāda position, although it is independent of his definition of existence. He recognised, on the other hand, the need to differentiate between different sorts of intentional existence in order to avoid the heresy of eternalism with reference to past and future objects. He did this by first distinguishing between two fundamental sorts of existence – primary existence (*dravyasat*) and secondary, derived existence (*prajñaptisat*). He next subdivided primary existence into that which merely possesses self-essence (*sasvabhāvamātra*) and that which possesses function (*sakāritra*). This last category is again subdivided into that which possesses ability (*vṛtti, sāmarthya, vyāpāra*?) and that which does not. Secondary existence is divided into those entities which depend on primary existents and those which depend on other secondary existents. It follows therefore that with the latter category the process can be repeated, the regress eventually ending up with an n-th order dependence upon primary existence.[42] Thus we may illustrate our ontological table in the form of Diagram 1.

The categorisation is carried out in terms of *sat*, existence in a sense that is wider than just primary existence and incorporating within itself dependent and derivative secondary existents. Saṃghabhadra adds that the distinction between primary and secondary existence corresponds to that between ultimate and conventional truth (*paramārtha* and *saṃvṛtisatya*). This point is extremely

important for it shows that in the Sarvāstivāda the distinction between *satyas* was not soteriological but primarily philosophical, in this case ontological. This point is stated quite clearly by the Tibetan dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po in his *Grub mtha'* when explaining the Sarvāstivāda doctrines:

> The definition of conventional *satya* is as follows: It is an object where, if it can be destroyed or analysed into its separate parts by the mind, so the cognition of the nature of that thing must be abandoned. For example, a clay pot and a rosary. If the clay pot is destroyed by a hammer then the cognition which apprehends it as a clay pot is abandoned. If the rosary is analysed into each of its beads then the cognition which apprehends it as a rosary is abandoned. The definition of ultimate *satya* is as follows: It is an object where, if it can be destroyed or analysed into its separate parts by the mind, then the cognition of the nature of that thing would not be abandoned. For example, atoms which have no directional parts, partless moments of consciousness and those

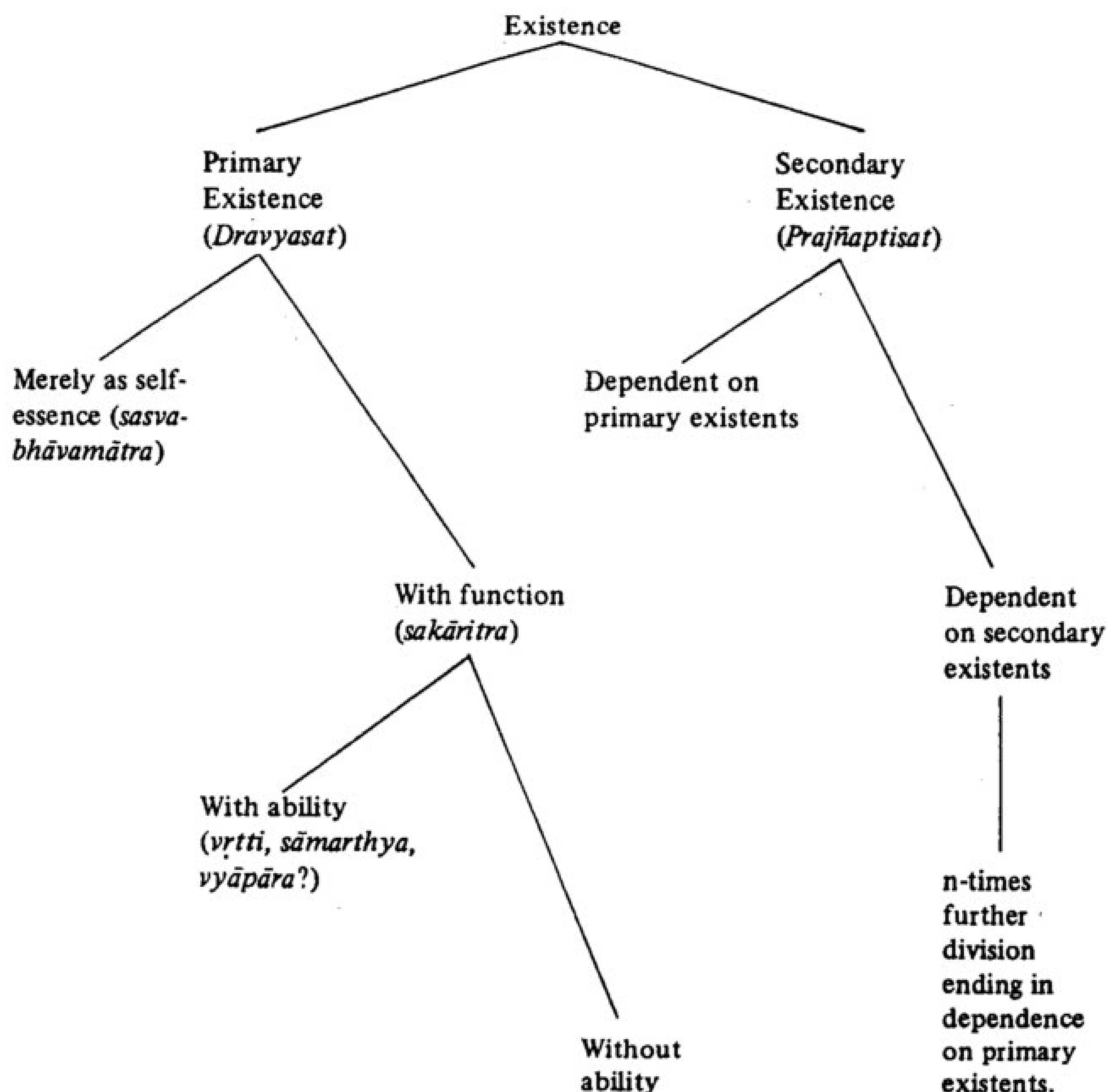


Diagram 1

> such as space (*ākāśa*) which are nonconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) . . . That being the case it is maintained that conventional *satyas*, even though not ultimately established are nevertheless established as true (*bden – satya* – actual), since this school maintains that every entity is truly established.[43]

For the Sarvāstivāda to be is synonymous with being an intentional referent of a cognitive act.[44] Giving examples of primary and secondary existents Saṃghabhadra lists form and sensation, that is, sense-data, as primary existents, and a pot as a secondary existent dependent upon other primary existents. As an example of a secondary existent dependent upon secondary existents and therefore capable of further analysis he mentions an army. Thus the distinction between *satyas* reflects not the difference of mystical from mundane here, or of phenomenal appearance from reality, soteriological goal from worldly life but rather the logical requirements of resolving a tension between two epistemological and ontological positions; firstly, that all intentional objects of consciousness are given existential status, and secondly, that the requirements of analytical certainty necessitates a more fundamental ontological status for some existents than for others. Primary existents are those entities which cannot be doubted, either because in the case of partless atoms to doubt would lead to an infinite regress, or because to doubt would destroy perception and the religious life altogether, as, for example, with sense data and the religious goal itself.

Saṃghabhadra observes in his discussion of *nirvāna* that the word 'is' can only be applied in two cases – primary existence and secondary existence – and that there are no other sorts.[45] One cannot apply the word 'is' to an entity absolutely nonexistent. Furthermore it is said in the *Vibhāṣā* that "pour les "choses agglomérées" elles s'appuient sur les entités réelles (*dravyasatvastu*): c'est par métaphore qu'on leur attribue l'existence; tantôt elles existent, tantôt n'existent pas."[46] That is, to be in a primary sense is to really exist and not sometimes to exist and sometimes not to exist. The implication of permanence here is however only apparent since neither sense-data nor atoms, which were themselves explicable in terms of spatially minimal sense-data, were ever thought of by the Sarvāstivāda as permanent. As McGovern notes, "Unlike the atoms of the Vaiśesikas and Jains . . . the atoms of the Buddhists are not eternal. They spring into being from time to time, and then are destroyed, lapsing seemingly into nothingness."[47] The rationale behind atoms lay in establishing a spatial minimum on the same model as the temporal moment,[48] and there are two coherent ways of interpreting the *Vibhāṣā* here. Firstly conditioned primary existents, while not permanent, do have continued existence in opposition to nonexistence. That is, they occur and then cease while continuing to have that sort of existence possessed by past and future *dharmas*. Secondly, secondary existents sometimes exist and sometimes do not exist even when apprehended, while there can be no question of doubt that they exist in the case of primary existents. As analytical simples they are certain but they are not permanent. Their certainty lies

ultimately in their status as necessary to make sense of the experienced world and goal-directed religious life.

Only a *dharma* has a self-essence and can be a primary existent,[49] but all existents are *sat*. This point is significant, for in Madhyamaka texts we find an absorption of *sat* into self-essence which is unwarranted within the Sarvāstivāda framework. Nāgārjuna states in his *Madhyamakakārikā* that "there does not occur the cessation of an existent (*sat*) entity",[50] on which Candrakīrti observes that "cessation is illogical as regards an entity which has not abandoned its self-essence."[51] Here '*sat*' is specifically glossed by '*svabhāva*' in spite of the fact that Saṃghabhadra would not have admitted that a secondary existent had a *svabhāva*.

The category of primary existence is essentially that of certain and nondependent existence. As the *Abhidhannasamuccaya* notes, "A primary existent is an object grasped by sense which is independent of discourse and independent of anything other than that."[52] A secondary existent is the exact reverse of this, that is, dependent upon language and that which is other than language. But this lack of dependence on the part of primary existents is to be interpreted in the sense of the possibility of conceptual analysis and physical fragmentation rather than causal independence. The secondary existent is dependent upon mental and linguistic construction, synthesis out of more fundamental and indubitable elements. These primary existents, on the other hand, are those elements which make up the synthesised existents and therefore cannot themselves have the sort of dependence which the latter enjoy. Nevertheless for the Sarvāstivāda all conditioned *dharmas* are momentary or semi-momentary, even primary existents in the empirical world are impermanent and therefore caused. Consequently they do not escape dependence as causal preconditioning. A primary existent is primary and thus independent because it is the basis upon which rests secondary existents such as most of the objects of our everyday world, which are capable of further division. In spite of this flight from the 'life-world', the Husserlian *lebenswelt*, the realism of the Sarvāstivāda lay in accepting the phenomenological point that nevertheless secondary existents are *existents*, they really do exist albeit not in the same way as primary existents.[53]

The fundamental topic of inter-Buddhist controversy was the category of *sasvabhāvamātra*, since this was the category which pertained most closely to the ontological status of past and future *dharmas*. In the *Vibhāṣā* an opponent asks whether it is an existing *dharma* or a nonexisting *dharma* which arises when a future *dharma* comes into existence, pointing out obviously unwelcome conclusions to the Sarvāstivāda whichever horn of the dilemma is accepted. The *Vibhāṣā* replies that (trans. Poussin) "la nature propre (*t'i, svabhāva*) du *dharma* existe, mais non pas son activité. Recontrant causes et conditions, le *dharma* engendre l'activité."[54] On the same topic Saṃghabhadra quotes Vasumitra, "La différence des trois époques est établis par l'activité. Les *saṃskāras* qui n'ont pas encore d'activité sont dits "futurs", au temps où ils ont activité, ils sont dits "présents"; quand leur activité est détruite, ils sont dits passés". Mais il n'y a pas

de distinction dans la chose (*dravya*)."[55] In other words the distinction between the modes of existence of a *dharma* in the past and future and a *dharma* in the present corresponds to the opposition *sasvabhāvamātradravya::sakāritradravya*. The distinction obviously has nothing to do with secondary existence, that is, our everyday world, but rather it pertains to those analytically ultimate reals which underly the given and render it possible. A *svabhāva* is something a primary existent *has*,[56] and a *dharma* as past or future *only* has a *svabhāva*, a self-essence, while a *dharma* in the present stage *also* has a function (*kāritra*). The presence or absence of function is the determinant of whether the *dharma* is temporally present or not, but there is a crucial asymmetry here with the *svabhāva*. The presence or absence of a *svabhāva* does not determine the temporal status of the *dharma* since this is determined by the presence or absence of function and where the absence occurs relative to the precedence or subsequence of the function concerned. Rather, the presence or absence of the *svabhāva* indicates an entity's primary or secondary status. If *x* has a *svabhāva* then it *is* a primary existent irrespective of its temporal determination, that is, the *svabhāva* determines primary and not temporal status. Only derivatively does it enable us to say that past and future *dharmas* exist merely as possessing self-essence, through the atemporal use of the verb 'to be' combined with intentional reference across the temporal range. Fundamentally the *svabhāva* is not concerned with time at all but is rather an atemporal determinant of primary existential status. With their category of the 'self-essence' as transcending the present moment the Sarvāstivādins were half-consciously indicating a difference in the given between (talking tenselessly about *x*) and (talking in the present tense, where *x* is a primary existent) The atemporal category of the *svabhāva* thus enabled the construction of a list of primary existents (*dharmas*) to be included as *dravyas* under the categories of the ontological table, since the systematisation of the dharmic list depended upon the tenseless use of language. Because *x* is a primary existent due to bearing a *svabhāva* so it can be tenselessly referred to for the purposes of dharmic systematisation.

This position on the role of the *svabhāva* as positing primary existents is common to both the Sarvāstivāda and the Theravāda. When the *Visuddhimagga* asserts with reference to the bases (*āyatanas*) that "prior to their occurrence the self-essence is not apprehended and after their cessation it is completely destroyed"[57] the two schools disagree by implication on questions of temporal determination and ultimately on the possibility of reference to nonexistents, but not over the primary status to be given to the entity which possesses the *svabhāva*. For both it is the presence or absence of the *svabhāva* which renders the entity a primary existent, and if the Sarvāstivādin sees the Theravādin as destroying the opposition *sasvabhāvamātradravya::sakāritradravya* and thus rendering impossible the tenseless use of language and many of our everyday cognitive experiences, nevertheless the disagreement is epistemological and linguistic, not primarily ontological.

The commentary to the *Visuddhimagga* observes that *dhammas* are so called

because they bear (*dhāraṇa*) their *sabhāvas*, in other words it is the fact that they are *sasvabhāva* which makes them *dharmas* and thus primary existents.[58] Saṃghabhadra speaks of the *svabhāva* of consciousness as being to apprehend an object,[59] while the *Mūla Ṭīkā* on the *Atthasālinī* notes that the *sabhāva* (trans. Ñāṇamoli) "consisting in, say, hardness as that of earth, or touching as that of contact, is not common to all *dhammas*."[60] In other words the *svabhāva* is unique to each *dharma* to which it pertains. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* the *svabhāva* is said to be the same as the *svalakṣaṇa*, the individual or defining characteristic, and is set in opposition to the general characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) which pertain to all conditioned *dharmas* – impermanence and so on.[61] Yaśomitra explains that the *svabhāva* is what individually distinguishes one thing from another, and glosses the eternality of the *svabhāva* with the comment "Whatever is the defining characteristic of form and so on exists throughout all time."[62] This, as we shall see, is a very significant point for understanding the Sarvāstivāda position here. The *Atthasālinī* observes that the characteristic can be the specific or the common characteristic of *dhammas*, the former being the *sabhāva*.[63] This identity of *svabhāva* and *svalakṣaṇa* is also found mentioned in the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā*,[64] while Sthiramati says in his *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* that "the characteristic of entities is indeed the self-essence, as, for example, the element of earth has solidity for its characteristic and the element does not exist apart from solidity."[65] Āryadeva states in his *Śataśāstra*, "Each *dharma* has a characteristic of its own. It is from their characteristics that we know that there are *dharmas*; e.g., the characteristic of earth is solidity, the characteristic of water is fluidity, the characteristic of fire is heat, the characteristic of wind is motion, the characteristic of understanding is knowledge. But ether (*ākāśa*) has no characteristic. Therefore it is not existent" (trans. Tucci).[66] The impossibility of an entity without a defining characteristic underlies Nāgārjuna's arguments in Chapter 5 of the *Madhyamakakārikā*, while Saṃghabhadra asserts that "la nature propre diffère puisque les caractères (*lakṣaṇa*) sont distincts."[67]

A nonexistent cannot have any *lakṣaṇa* and is, as we have seen, ineffable. To have a *svabhāva*, and thus to have primary existence, is therefore the same thing as being uniquely describable, that is, to have a characteristic such that the entity concerned can be *uniquely differentiated* from another entity. As the *Abhidharmakośa* observes, "*Dharmas* have a *svabhāva* because they are differentiated from the nature of another (*parabhāva*)."[68] To have a *svabhāva* is to exist in a primary sense, to be unique, in no sense whatsoever to be something else, and the *svabhāva* is that characteristic which is applicable solely to that entity and renders unique verbal description and hence positioning within a taxonomic system possible. Only primary existents are amenable to unique description, since all secondary existents, as capable of analytic subdivision, have elements common to both themselves and others. The *svabhāva* is thus the self-essence of the primary existent to the extent to which it is the essential element in characterising that existent as a self, that is, as uniquely individuated. It is *not* in its

own right an ontological category, but is rather an ontological determinant, that is to say a determinant of primary ontological status. Underlying the Sarvāstivāda theory of the continued real existence of a *dharma* in the three times inasmuch as it simply has self-essence lay an indentification of the unique characteristic with its verbal formulation as a uniquely individuating description. Touching as characterising contact, for example, always characterises contact as its defining factor even though any one particular case of touching ceases with the cessation of contact. This point can perhaps be detected in a half-articulated form in a discussion in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* where an opponent suggests that past and future forms are not form since they lack the characteristic factor of resistance. The reply is that they were resistant and will be resistant respectively and are therefore called form by virtue of being of the same nature. In other words *x* is uniquely characterised if it was or will be uniquely characterised irrespective of whether this is actually occurring. *x* is characterised inasmuch as it is a primary existent so long as it is not an absolutely nonexistent entity, regardless of its temporal status. A definition is independent of the specific case and therefore atemporal; the *svabhāva* as atemporal pertains not to any one particular case of resistance or touching. But an absolutely nonexistent entity thereby has no *svabhāva* and no characteristic either in its own right or as dependent upon another.[69]

To be a primary existent is to have a *svabhāva* which means that it is possible to uniquely answer the question "What is *x*?". In certain Pāli texts we find mention of the "*sabhāva* language", the real, correct and unique name for each thing, a language of uniquely referring names which arises out of this notion of a uniquely characterising definition.[70] The self-essence is thus represented verbally by a definition which tenselessly applies to primary existents, the possession of such a definition being the system's criterion for primary existence and enabling the existent to be recognised and classified within the taxonomic system. Such a criterion obviously reflects very closely extra-philosophical considerations, probably the needs of introspective meditative activity where control and dominance results from naming and classification. This need can be clearly seen in the predominance given to mental categories in the dharmic lists which still survive. Abhidharmic ontology reflects the requirements of contemplative rather than physical activity, its primary existents which enter into combination to compose the entities of the life-world being primary because uniqueness and absolute difference is required for introspective clarity. To have a unique definition is to be unique, and the prerequisite of definition only with reference to existents in the Sarvāstivāda meant that to have a unique definition, the result of a unique characteristic, necessitated being a unique existent.

Saṃghabhadra notes at one point, "Autre point. Le non-existant ne peut reçevoir le nom de "matière du discours". Or le Sūtra dit que les trois époques sont matière du discours. Donc le passé et le futur sont réellement munis d'une nature propre (*sasvabhāva*)."[71] Poussin refers to the *Abhidharmakośa* where it is said that conditioned *dharmas* are '*matière du discours*' (*kathāvastu*), indicating

that primary existents require the category of *sasvabhāvamātra* in order to supply the bare but primary existence necessary for linguistic reference and the atemporal support of a uniquely individuating description. The role of *sasvabhāvamātradravyas* as intentional referents, *entia rationis*, is also indicated quite clearly by Saṃghabhadra, "du passé et du futur, il y a "nature propre", il n'y a pas activité. Par nature propre, on entend la cognoscibilité (*jñeyadharmatā*) du passé et du futur; comme ils sont munis de cognoscibilité, nous disons qu'ils existent."[72] Such 'intentional inexistence' by no means necessitates the eternality of any present spatio-temporally instantiated entity, as the Sarvāstivāda fully realised. The fact that *x* is a primary existent which can always be referred to and thought of was felt to require some sort of existence, but not the sort of existence that a momentary present entity enjoys. Such is a perfectly reasonable and defensible position, albeit perhaps mistaken. In fact for Sarvāstivāda *existence sasvabhāva* is of a different *type*, on a higher level, a metalinguistic or metasystematic category necessary for the atemporal systematisation of primary existents in the dharmic list.

To answer the question of *what* a primary existent is implied for the Sarvāstivāda *that* it is, but to say *that* it is (atemporally) is to imply that it is something but not to say *what* it is. What it is and that it is are not the same but it is equally true that they cannot be radically differentiated when what *x* is refers uniquely only to *x*. Even if I speak of the temporally-determined present stage of a primary existent, which alone I may wish to assert has spatio-temporal instantiation, it is still the case that what it is is different from that it is, and yet it cannot be without being something and therefore cannot be spoken of as completely different from what it is. We have here a question of completely different linguistic categories, not different entities. If I say that *x* is *y* where '*y*' names the defining characteristic then *x* and *y* can indeed be said to be neither the same nor different, and the defining characteristic can remain atemporally the defining characteristic even though *x* itself may be momentary. Of course this particular case of touching, for example as characterising contact with cease, but it will not cease to be the case that touching characterises contact and that contact can be granted the sort of existence required to be the referent of the notion 'characterised by touching'. This is *sasvabhāvamātra*, it is the same sort of existence required in order to imagine or remember an event which is not present, and any case of contact whatever its temporal determination *is* (atemporally) characterised by touching. The critics of the Sarvāstivāda failed to realise that the *real* existence of past and future *dharmas* was *in part* a derivative of an atemporal use of the verb 'to be'.[73]

It is the presence or absence of function in the case of a primary existent which determines its temporal status. This position became orthodox with the Sarvāstivāda following its adoption by the *Vibhāṣā* on the advocacy of Vasumitra. To be a *bhāva*, an entity in the sense of a present primary existent is thus to do something, and since the present is continually changing it follows that no spatio-temporally instantiated primary entity is permanent. This is enough to

secure the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence, since all the given inasmuch as it has present primary existents as its substrata is continually changing irrespective of the *svabhāva* which is concerned with different problems.

In the earlier Sarvāstivāda, as represented by the doctrines of the *Vibhāṣā*, to have a function was given as the sole determinant of the present temporal stage.[74] This doctrine was however extensively criticised by the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* which maintain principally that an entity which is prevented from carrying out its function cannot therefore be said to be present.[75] Saṃghabhadra, putting forward the opponent's point of view, added that furthermore it is accepted by the Sarvāstivāda that past events have effects and therefore it follows that they must be present.[76] Saṃghabhadra's reply is in effect to modify the Sarvāstivāda position while accusing the Sautrāntika of not correctly understanding his opponent's doctrine. The Sarvāstivāda makes a distinction, he explains, between function and ability. This distinction was facilitated by the fact that a momentary primary existent is potentially able to have two causal operations, only one of which is necessary to its spatiotemporal existence.[77] Within the series of momentary entities each moment has to engender the next, but it can also act as a contributory condition towards producing a different sort of effect. We might speak of this as 'horizontal' and 'vertical' causality, within the series and transcending it respectively. A momentary instant of visual power horizontally produces the next moment of visual power and may or may not, depending on other factors such as light and so on, vertically produce vision of the object. Saṃghabhadra explains that function is defined as the ability to give rise to the effect, but that there can be ability without function.[78] In darkness the visual power has no ability to produce vision although it still has a function which gives rise to an effect in the form of the next moment. It is ability which gives rise to an entity of a completely different sort, and so it is ability which has efficacy in the case of a past *dharma* exerting causal activity. The past *dharma* is thus without function and therefore not present, although still causally efficacious. It follows that to be present is to have horizontal causality, which may or may not also include vertical causality – a fact which serves to remind us that we are dealing here with primary existents which are frequently positioned within the system in terms of what they do.

In the ontological table it is stated that there can be function with ability and function without ability, this division being the innovation introduced by Saṃghabhadra. The two together exhaust the category of function. Later Saṃghabhadra defines function as the ability to give rise to an effect, pointing out that there can nevertheless be ability other than function. We can represent his first point by a circle divided into two parts, one for function without ability and one for function with ability, as in Diagram 2(a). The point that there can be ability without function should enable us to continue the first diagram into two overlapping circles, 2(b). This diagram obviously represents Saṃghabhadra's position as he intended it to be, but it is worth noting in passing that Saṃghabhadra's position is not entirely clear, for in defining function as the ability to

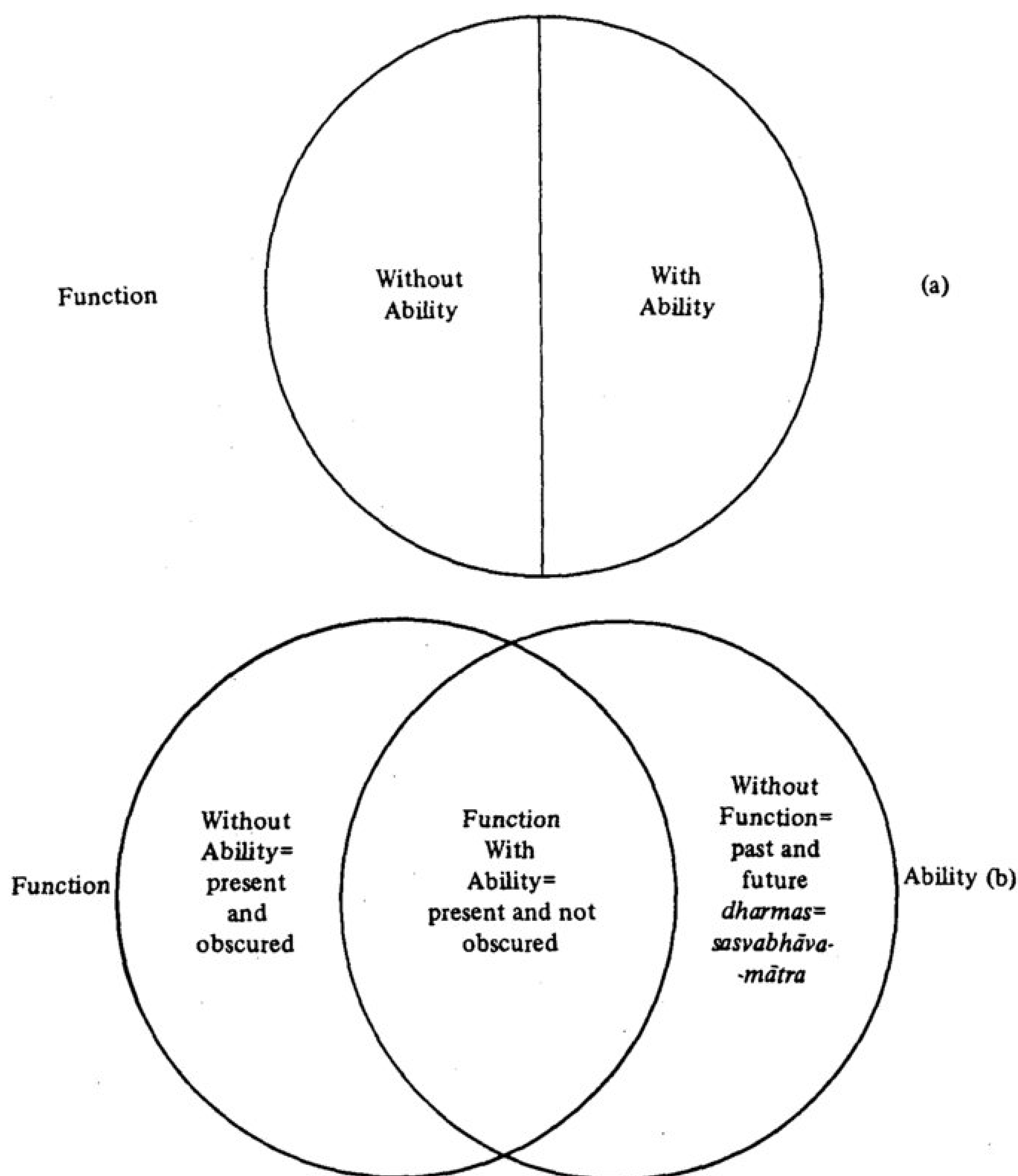


Diagram 2

give rise to an effect he *seems* to be suggesting that all function is a form of ability. If so then he must be using 'ability' in two different ways; firstly as a technical term for that generating power which sometimes accompanies function and sometimes occurs independently, and secondly, for any sort of causal power including ability in its first sense and function. Otherwise it would be impossible for there to occur function without ability.

To define present in terms of causal efficacy and then to use this as a basic upon which to build an account of time is in the present context scarcely adequate. For an action to occur time is required; time is the prerequisite of action and to define time in terms of action would seem to put the cart before the horse

and at the very least give rise to a vicious infinite regress. With the exception of Buddhadeva's attempt to explain time in terms of relativity all the early Sarvāstivāda attempts to explain time based on certain phenomenal characteristics committed the same mistake of explaining *x* in terms of *y*, where *y* couldn't occur without *x*. Furthermore the orthodox status of Vasumitra's theory tended to serve as a check on sophisticated later thinkers such as Saṃghabhadra evolving a more adequate theory.[79]

Secondary existence is the sort of existence pertaining to entites which can be further analysed and which are therefore conglomerates composed out of primary existents. An opponent in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* notes that if a *skandha* is a heap then it is not a primary existent but only a secondary.[80] The Sarvāstivādin argues with reference to the person (*pudgala*) claimed to have Self status by the Vātsīputrīyas that if it is a collection or complex like milk then it is a secondary existent and the name 'person' gives an artificial unity to a collection of more fundamental elements.[81] The Sarvāstivādin Subhagupta states in his *Bahyārṭhasiddhikārikā* that unity is superimposed by means of constructive and discursive apprehension (*rnam par rtog pa'i shes pa/vikalpajñāna*) upon a continuum of separate elements,[82] while according to K. Venkata Ramanan "*prajñapti*" is used in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* as a synonym for 'name' (*nāma/samjñā*).[83] The term is also used with this meaning in the *Atthasālinī*,[84] while in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* Candrakīrti refers to secondary existents as the referents of language.[85] The *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* maintains that the self-essence of a linguistic referent is the same as a secondary existent.[86] Secondary existents are in every respect the reverse of primary existents, they are the majority of the entities of our everyday lives and are essentially dependent upon primary existents. They are not at all independent or unique – we have already seen that the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* defines the secondary existent as being dependent on language and things other than language.[87] Because of this past and future *dharmas* couldn't possibly be secondary existents since, as Saṃghabhadra points out, they would thereby require the prior existence of past and future primary existents upon which to depend. They could not be dependent upon the present *dharma* since in the case of secondary existents when the primary existent as substratum ceases they also cease.[88]

Entities are secondary existents because they are capable of analysis or destruction into more fundamental constituents. As regards the empirical world only spatio-temporal sensual minima have primary existence since they alone cannot be analysed away and cannot be doubted. All else in the external given world is secondary existence. A secondary existent is an existent solely because it is an intentional and primarily a linguistic referent (see Williams (1980) *passim*). But primary existents too are linguistic referents for the Sarvāstivāda, the point of difference being that the secondary existent is dependent and therefore has no self-essence, in its own right it is nothing, that is, it lacks a uniquely individuating description. Secondary existents are described in terms of elements which are common to a number of spatial and temporal points and

therefore cannot be uniquely described, they involve universals which necessarily transcend spatio-temporal momentariness and therefore cannot themselves be ultimately real.[89]

In summary, therefore, the Sarvāstivāda ontology maintained that all which could be an intentional object of consciousness and verbally characterised must exist, since one could not cognise and speak about nonexistents. But the manner of existing of these referents differed radically. The category of (existing solely with self-essence) was necessary in order to allow for imagination, memory and the atemporal referring of uniquely individuating descriptions, that is, descriptions which referred solely to one type of entity, an entity which was fundamental to the extent to which it could be neither physically fragmented nor further analysed by the mind. These entities are primary existents, and they are constructed into the spatio-temporal everyday world. As regards the external world they are cognitively certain sense-data. The self-essence granted the sort of existence required for constructing an atemporal system or taxonomy of primary existents and derivatively for talking about primary existents which are past and future. For a primary existent to be spatio-temporally instantiated is the same thing as for it to be effective, and this sort of existence was radically distinguished from existing simply possessed of self-essence. This second sort of existence (instantiation) comprises the spatio-temporal momentary given and, as given, necessarily can be intended and spoken about. Secondary existence, occupying a spatiotemporal spread, is constructed out of these as fundamentally the sort of existence required by empirical, non-uniquely individuating intentional cognitive acts and utterances.

Notes

This paper is a revised version of part of my D. Phil thesis, *Language and Existence in Mādhyamika Buddhist Philosophy*, University of Oxford, 1978. Full information on the works mentioned in the notes can be found in the final bibliography. Except where otherwise mentioned all Tibetan texts are cited in the Peking edition, abbreviated as P.: *The Tibetan Tripitaka* (ed. D. T. Suzuki), Tokyo-Kyoto, 1957.

1 iha ca sato'rthasya pratiṣedhaḥ kriyate nāsataḥ / tadyathā – nāsti ghaṭo gehe iti sato ghaṭasya pratiṣedhaḥ kriyate nāsataḥ / On verse II.

2 Secondary or mental existence, Brentano's *entia rationis* (*upacārasattā*). See especially Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* III: 3: 42: evaṃ ca pratiṣedhyeṣu pratiṣedhaprakḷptaye / āsriteṣūpacāreṇa pratiṣedhaḥ pravartate // For Quine's critique see his 'On What There Is', reprinted in *From a Logical Point of View*.

3 See Matilal (1971), p. 131.

4 Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference" in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, pp. 56ff.

5 Mañjuśrīkīrti, *Kīrtimala*, quoted by K. Regamey in *Three Chapters from the Samādhirājasutra*, p. 64: yi ge med pa zhes bya ba ni mi 'gyur ba brjod du med pa ste /

6 Quine, p. 4. Compare Franz Brentano in *Wahrheit und Evidenz*, as translated and quoted by Jan Srzednicki (1965), p. 27: "(On the basis of the assumption of *entia rationis*) it is equally easy to reach the absurdity of an infinite multitude (of entities) in another way. (Simple reflection shows that), like God himself, there exists everlast-

ingly an infinite multitude of *entia rationis*. Let us only mention: an infinity of impossibilities, of beings of impossibilities, of beings of "beings of impossibilities", as well as: an infinity of "non-beings of other impossibilities", "non-beings of realia", etc., etc." Material in parentheses supplied by the translator.

7 Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, A 37, 49a6ff. As quoted in Bochenski (1970), p. 54.

8 For the Sarvāstivāda use of "*dharma*" see Stcherbatsky (1970) *passim*. In fact it seems pointless to ask what this word means, since there is no *one* meaning of the term. Rather it denotes in this context the existents that a system of Abhidharma postulated as primary, whatever they might be. The same meaning is denoted in the Sarvāstivāda (but not the Theravāda) by "*dravya*". A far more interesting problem is to uncover the principles, criteria and presuppositions according to which a particular system constructed its taxonomy of primary existents.

9 Poussin (1937), pp. 25–128. For a translation of the relevant sections from the *Vibhāṣā* see Poussin (1937), pp. 7–25.

10 *Bhāṣya* on *Abhidharmakośa* 5: 25: sati viṣaye vijñānaṃ pravartate, nāsati / yadi cātītānāgataṃ na syād asadālambanaṃ vijñānaṃ syāt / tato vijñānam eva na syād; ālambanābhāvāt / . . . yadi cātītaṃ na syāt śubhāsubhasya karmaṇaḥ phalam āyatyāṃ kathaṃ syāt! na hi phalotpattikāle varttamāno vipākahetur astīti / tasmād asty evātītānāgatam iti Vaibhāṣikāḥ / For the specific meaning of '*vipākahetu*' as one of the six *hetus* see the *Bhāṣya* on 2: 54 cd.

11 For the developed Theravādin doctrine of these categories see the *Visuddhimagga* 15. For the Sarvāstivāda see *Kośa*, Bk. I passim and Stcherbatsky (1970), pp. 7–10.

12 *Bhāṣya* on 5: 25: "dvayaṃ pratītya vijñānasyotpādaḥ" ity uktam / dvayaṃ katamat? cakṣu rūpāṇi yāvat mano dharmā iti / asati vā'tītānāgate tadālambanaṃ vijñānaṃ dvayaṃ pratītya na syāt / evaṃ tāvad āgamato'sty atītānāgatam /

13 *Atthasālinī*, p. 278: Vinā hi āvajjanena cittaṃ uppajjati, ārammaṇena pana vinā n'uppajjatī ti.

14 Poussin (1937), p. 69.

15 For the Mediaeval use of this term and its relationship to Brentano's usage see Herbert Spiegelberg, "'Intention' and 'Intentionality' in the Scholastics, Brentano and Husserl", reprinted in McAlister (1976), pp. 108–127. Ausonio Marras has written a reply to Spiegelberg, "Scholastic Roots of Brentano's Conception of Intentionality", reprinted in the same volume, pp. 128–139.

16 See Srzednicki (1965), p. 52.

17 Brentano (1973), pp. 86–87.

18 See McAlister, "Chisholm and Brentano on Intentionality" in McAlister (1976), p. 154; and Srzednicki (1965), pp. 30–31.

19 Srzednicki (1965), pp. 53–54.

20 C. D. Broad, "Ostensible Temporality", reprinted in Gale (1968), p. 132. See also Williams (1977).

21 Aristotle's *Categories* 7b15, in McKeon (1941), p. 20.

22 The term 'reism' was coined in the 1920s by Tadeusz Kotarbiński for the view that "there are no objects other than things . . . every object is a thing." He has since recognised the later Brentano as a precursor of this view. See Tadeusz Kotarbiński, "Franz Brentano as Reist" in McAlister, pp. 194–203. Cf. D. B. Terrell, 'Brentano's Argument for Reismus', *ibid.*, pp. 204–212.

23 Srzednicki (1965), pp. 36–49.

24 See Gershon Weiler (1970), p. 223.

25 Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), pp. 408–409.

26 Poussin (1937), p. 115.

27 *Works*, 5, p. 104: na hi sadasatoḥ saṃbandhaḥ śabdapravṛttinimittabhāk, avastutvāt /

28 Poussin (1937), pp. 27–28.

29 On *Madhyamakakārikā* 7: 14. See P. 5229, Mdo 'grel 17, Tsa 55a–55b: gal te yang dngos po ma skyes pa skyed par byed na / don gang dag ma skyes pa de dag thams cad kyang skye bar thal bar 'gyur te / de la byis pa so so'i skye po thams cad la byang chub ma skyes pa de yang skye bar thal dang . . . ri bong dang rta'i rwa la sogs pa ma skyes pa de yang skye bar thal bar 'gyur bas de yang mi 'dod de /

30 See here Jayarāśi's *Tattvopaplavasiṃha* in Radhakrishnan and Moore (1967), p. 231. Of course it can be argued that the case of an unexampled term and that of a logical contradiction are closer than might be presumed, for a horse with a horn could be seen as contrary to the very definition of a horse. Such being the case the notion of a horse with a horn would itself be a contradiction.

31 See Tucci's *Pre-Diṅnāga Buddhist texts on logic from Chinese sources*, Section 4, p. 75.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

33 See Aiyaswami Shastri's retranslation into Sanskrit from the Chinese: lakṣaṇam idaṃ vinā punar asan gujaḥ kena lakṣaṇena lakṣyate /

34 For the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* see Poussin (1928–1929), vol. I, p. 141. Cf. the commentary on the *Vākyapadīya* I: 121: atyantāsac ca prasiddhaṃ loke śaśaviṣāṇādi . . . vācā samutthāpyamānam mukhyasattāyuktam iva teṣu teṣu kāryeṣu pratyavabhāsate / On *upacārasattā* and reference see *Vākyapadīya* III: 3: 51ff and the commentaries thereon.

35 *Bhāṣya* on 1: 20: tatrātītaṃ rūpam anityatāniruddham / anāgatam anutpannam / pratyutpannam utpannāniruddham /

36 On *Madhyamakakārikā* 19: 1: yasmād utpanno niruddho hi bhāvasvabhāvaḥ atīta iti vyapadiśyate, utpanno'niruddho hi vartamānaḥ, alabdhātmabhāvo'nāgata iti / We have here an example of how the Madhyamaka perhaps misrepresented the Sarvāstivāda. The *Bhāṣya* makes no mention of a *svabhāva* and in fact the Sarvāstivāda did not wish to hold that the *svabhāva* comes into existence and ceases. Rather this occurs to the *bhāva*, the momentary entity.

37 Poussin (1937), p. 28.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

39 See Jayatilleke (1963), p. 433.

40 Poussin (1937), pp. 32–33.

41 For Saṃghabhadra on *nirvāṇa* see Poussin (1930), pp. 278ff.

42 Saṃghabhadra does not state that the process must come to an end but this is obvious since an infinite regress was recognised as a fallacy in Indian thought. In actual practice the regress only seems to continue for one or two stages.

43 *Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba* in *Collected Works* 6, folios 498–499: bcom pa 'am blos cha shas so sor bsal ba na rang 'dzin gyi blo 'dor rung ba 'i chos su dmigs pa de / kun rdzob bden pa'i mtshan nyid / mtshan gzhi ni / rdza bum tho bas bcom pa na rdza bum du 'dzin ba'i blo 'dor ba'i phyir dang / phreng ba'i rdog po so sor bsal ba na phreng bar 'dzin ba'i blo 'dor ba'i phyir / bcom pa 'am blos cha shas so sor bsal ba na rang 'dzin gyi blo 'dor du mi rung ba'i chos su dmigs pa de / don dam bden pa'i mtshan nyid / mtshan gzhi ni / rdul phran phyogs kyi cha med dang / shes pa skad cig cha med dang / 'dus ma byas kyi nam mkha' lta bu yin te / . . . des na kun rdzob bden pa rnams don dam du ma grub kyang bden grub tu 'dod de / lugs 'dis dngos po la bden grub kyis khyab pa khas len pa'i phyir / The same definition is given by other Tibetan writers, Klong rdol bla ma for example, and can be traced back to *Abhidharmakośa* 6: 4: yatra bhinnena tad buddhir anyāpohe dhiyā ca tat / ghaṭāmbuvat saṃvṛtisat, paramārthasad anyathā //

44 *Ibid.*, folio 498: yod pa / shes bya / dngos po rnams don gcig /

45 Poussin (1930), pp. 278–279.

46 Poussin (1937), p. 22.

47 McGovern (1923), vol. I, p. 127.
48 This point is quite clearly stated by Saṃghabhadra. See Poussin (1923–1931), vol. I, pp. 144–145 note 3.
49 This is clear from the ontological table where the category *sasvabhāvamātra* is included under *dravyasat* and radically differentiated from *prajñaptisat*, most of the objects of our everyday experience. In *Visuddhimagga* VII: 246 *dhamma* is equated with *sabhāva*, but any hint of identity would be denied by the Sarvāstivāda. For the meaning of "*sabhāva*" in Pali texts see the lengthy note by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli to his translation of the *Visuddhimagga*, pp. 317–318, note 68. No *dharma* can, of course, be a secondary existent.
50 *Madhyamakakārikā* 7: 30: sataś ca tāvad bhāvasya nirodho nopapadyate /
51 *Prasannapadā* on above: svabhāvād apracyutasya bhāvasya nirodho na yuktaḥ /
52 *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, p. 16: abhilāpanirapekṣas tadanyanirapekṣaś cendriyagocaro dravyasat /
53 The question of metaphilosophical interest here is one of the extra-philosophical criteria by which the secondary existents of one system can become the primary existents of another, and vice-versa.
54 Poussin (1937), p. 16.
55 *Ibid.*, p. 93.
56 This point has not been appreciated due to an extreme emphasis being placed on the Buddhist denial of the relationship between substance and attributes (see *Bhāṣya* on 3: 100). If I say that *x* is white I am predicating whiteness of *x*. To deny the relationship between substance and attributes is not to deny that whiteness is predicated of *x* but is rather to deny the ontological implications by which we have two independent entities which somehow have to be related. It would be absurd to suggest that *x is* whiteness, even if whiteness is all that is actually perceived, as in the case of a white patch. If I say that *x has* whiteness I am not necessarily suggesting an ontological relationship of substance and attribute. Rather I am merely suggesting that if *x* ceased to exist there could still be cases of white. That *x* is white *could* furthermore be an eternal truth without *x* thereby being eternal. This point would be obscured if *x* and whiteness were identical. Again, *x* is something and this implies that *x* has a definition. The fact that *x* has this definition is an eternal truth, but we cannot say that *x is* this definition, which would simply be a category mistake. The upshot of this is that we have no right to ignore the '*sa-*' in '*sasvabhāvamātra*' or to suppose that it was meant in anything other than the literal sense of possession.
57 *Visuddhimagga* XV: 15: atha kho pubbe udayā appaṭiladdhasabhāvāni, uddhaṃ vayā paribhinnasabhāvāni . . .
58 *Paramatthamañjūsā* 282, translated and quoted by Ñāṇamoli, p. 317, note 68.
59 Poussin (1937), p. 33.
60 See Ñāṇamoli, p. 318, note 68.
61 *Bhāṣya* on 6: 14: svabhāva evaiṣāṃ svalakṣaṇam / sāmānyalakṣaṇaṃ tu anityatā saṃskṛtānām . . .
62 *Sphuṭārthā* on *Bhāṣya* on 6: 14: . . . ebhyas tribhyo'nyeṣāṃ yathāsvaṃ svabhāvaḥ / Also Yaśomitra on *Bhāṣya* on 5: 27: yad rūpādeḥ svalakṣaṇam, tat sarvasmin kāle vidyata iti. Gloss on svabhāvaḥ sarvadā cāstīti.
63 Tesaṃ tesaṃ dhammānaṃ sabhāvo vā sāmannaṃ vā lakkhaṇaṃ nāma. *Atthasālinī*, p. 63.
64 *Pañjikā* on *Tattvasaṃgraha*, verse 418: lakṣaṇaśabdasya svabhāvavacanasya prastutatvāt //
65 *Madhyānta Vibhāga Śāstra*, p. 7: svabhāva eva hi bhāvānāṃ lakṣaṇam / tad yathā pṛthivīdhātuḥ kharalakṣaṇo na ca kharatvāt pṛthivīdhātuḥ pṛthag astīti /
66 In *Pre-Diṅnāga*, p. 75.
67 Poussin (1937), p. 79.

68 1: 18: svabhāvena parabhāvaviyogataḥ //
69 *Bhāṣya* on 1: 13: atītānāgataṃ tarhi rūpaṃ na prāpnoti? tad api rūpitaṃ rūpayiśyamāṇaṃ taj jātīyaṃ rūpam, indhanavat /
70 See the *Visuddhimagga* XIV: 25 and *Atthasālinī*, pp. 391–392: Vedanādayo hi mahāpaṭhavīādayo viya attano nāmaṃ karontā va uppajjanti, tesu uppannesu tesaṃ nāmaṃ uppannam eva hoti. Cf. Ñāṇamoli, p. 487, note 10.
71 Poussin (1937), p. 110. Cf. *Kośa* 1: 7. But it is to be noted that Saṃghabhadra specifically denies that all names have existent referents, as in the case of 'nonexistent'. The point here is that there can be a name with no referent, that is, these terms can enter language, but they cannot be given a unique or specific definition. We can speak about such terms because they exist, but we cannot speak about the referents of these terms because the referents being nonexistents they have no characteristics. Their name thus become mere sounds, like grunts – a point which becomes more significant in studying the Madhyamaka. For the Sarvāstivāda if we can talk *about* something, that is, it is *marière du discours*, then that thing exists. See also Poussin (1937), pp. 42–44.
72 Poussin (1937), p. 126.
73 We are thus in a position to understand the sense in which it is true to maintain that the *svabhāva* is eternal, the entity it characterises is not, and yet they are not different. The accusation of arbitrariness by the opponent is thus unfair. See *Bhāṣya* on 5: 27, where there is given an oft-quoted verse: svabhāvaḥ sarvadā cāsti bhāvo nityaś ca neṣyate / na ca svabhāvād bhāvo'nyo vyaktam īsvaraceṣṭitam //
74 Poussin (1937), pp. 23–25.
75 *Bhāṣya* on 5: 26: pratyutpannasya tatsabhāgasya cakṣuḥ kiṃ karitram?
76 Poussin (1937), pp. 94ff. Cf. *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* as quoted by Poussin, *ibid.*, p. 94, note 4.
77 See Poussin (1937), p. 95 and Poussin's note, p. 95, note 1.
78 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
79 See here Williams (1977), pp. 279–294, especially pp. 290–291. This criticism would not apply, of course, in the case of a system which, however unsatisfactorily, argued that time has two levels. For the Vaiśeṣika time is one, eternal and undivided, a real entity, but difference in the form of the empirical temporal divisions is superimposed upon it due to change. Thus change occurs within the larger time and is our means of explaining temporal segmentation into days, hours, minutes and so on. See Śrīdhara's *Nyāyakandalī* (1916 translation), Chapter 4, Section 7, pp. 140–147.
80 *Bhāṣya* on 1: 20: yadi rāśyārthaḥ skandhārthaḥ, prajñaptisantaḥ skandhāḥ prāpnuvanti, anekadravyasamūhatvāt rāśipudgalavat.
81 *Kośa* 9, p. 1192: kṣīrādivat samudāyaś cet, prajñaptitaḥ / Cf. *Kośa* 9, p. 1196: ato yathā rūpādīny eva kṣīram udakaṃ vā prajñapyate samastāni, evam skandhaḥ pudgala iti siddham /
82 Verse 36 in 1967 edition: blos yis rtag tu rgyun chags dang / rigs mthun pa la 'dzin mod kyi / rnam par rtog pa'i shes pa yis / de gcig nyid du nges pa byed //
83 Venkata Ramanan (1976), p. 349, note 8.
84 *Atthasālinī*, p. 391: Ayaṃ hi nāma paññatti . . .
85 *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* on 6: 47: mngon par brjod pa ni btags pa'i rnam par 'dzin pa'i phyir te / Poussin edition in the German (1970) reprint.
86 *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* III: 7 in Lamotte (1938), vol. I, p. 51: yid kyi brjod pa tsam du zad pa nyid du dmigs shing ming dang bcas pa'i don / ngo bo nyid dang khyad par du btags pa dang bcas shing . . . It is to be noted however that while these references to Mahāyāna sources undoubtedly show the strong linguistic connexion of '*prajñapti*' during all periods of Buddhist thought, nevertheless in the wider context the term underwent a considerable extension of application and therefore meaning at the hands of Mahāyāna Buddhists. See Williams (1980) *passim*.

87 *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, p. 16: abhilāpasāpekṣas tadanyasāpekṣaś cendriyagocaraḥ prajñaptimat /

88 See Poussin (1937), pp. 47–49.

89 Buddhism never accepted the real existence of universals, and the controversy with the Naiyāyikas in particular lasted for a considerable time. Note that the problem is slightly different from that in the West, since for Buddhist thinkers what we hold to be individuals – this table, for instance – are really concealed universals inasmuch as they occupy a spatio-temporal spread. These topics and this passage are taken up again in the Madhyamaka context in Williams (1980), pp. 1ff.

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